

PRIMA'S OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE

HOMEWORLD²



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HOMEWORLD2

PRIMA'S OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE

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HOMERWORLD2

Prima's Official Strategy Guide



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Homeworld2*, successor to 1999's Game of the Year. It's a daunting task to follow in the footsteps of a genre buster like *Homeworld*, and nothing's been spared in the quest to carry this mantle forward with pride. A new, state-of-the-art 3D engine brings your fleet to life in astounding, almost cinematic detail, while the new interface makes controlling a three-dimensional fleet more intuitive than ever.

In the *Homeworld* mythos, the Hiigarans have always been the noble underdogs. Their story is full of tragedy, but it need not be tragic—not if you use this guide effectively.

How to Use This Book

Review Chapters 2 and 3 to familiarize yourself with the Hiigaran and Vaygr orders of battle. In particular, pay attention to each ship's strengths and weaknesses. You must learn why it is foolhardy to send an Interceptor squadron against Missile Corvettes. Chapter 4 addresses the basics of how to use your fleet for its designed purpose. Chapter 5 covers the principles that make any real time strategy (RTS) game a challenge—resourcing and technology advancement. Chapter 6 covers the advanced strategies and tactics for skilled players and their human opponents.

The single-player campaign walkthrough (Chapters 7–10) helps you convert your “book” knowledge into the hardwired, gut-level instincts of an effective fleet commander. With the benefit of this guide, you'll finish the campaign with a visceral understanding of your forces and their capabilities.

After you've destroyed everything the CPU can throw at you, multiplayer games test your mettle against the most dangerous foes of all—other *Homeworld* fans. Use the advanced multiplayer strategies in Chapter 11 to maintain your edge. Chapter 12 covers the basic battlefield layouts that ship with the game.

Next, we'll take a look at the myths behind this saga and who you'll encounter on this tremendous journey. Good luck.



CHAPTER 1: HOMEWORLD2 FUNDAMENTALS

THE EPIC STORY OF THE HOMEWORLD SAGA

In order for you to get a full appreciation of the epic adventure you're about to undertake, a few ancient texts have been translated and preserved for you here. This is the story of the exiles of Hiigara.

The Original Homeworld Saga

On Kharak, the old Kiith clans believed that Sajuuk—"He Whose Hand Shapes What Is"—exiled them to the desolate reaches of the galaxy. For millennia, the exiles struggled for survival, unaware of their true origins. Then, amidst the sands of Kharak, a single discovery forever changed the exiles—an ancient starship, buried in the sand.

Within its ruins lay the Guidestone and the promise of Hiigara, home. But this was not the only discovery, for the ruins also yielded the secrets needed to reverse engineer the Hyperspace Module that would take the exiles home. Building

an exact replica of the containment unit, the exiles placed the original core, the nexus that made hyperspace possible, within. This simple act sealed the exiles' fate in the years to come.

From the sands of Kharak, the Hiigarans returned home aboard the Mothership. Many remember the pain and sacrifices of the Return. What started out as a voyage of discovery became one of desperate survival. From the Inner Rim, the Taiidan Empire rose to challenge the exiles. Observing a 4,000-year-old edict, the Taiidan proceeded to firebomb Kharak—dooming all save the 600,000 crew members who volunteered to make the journey to Hiigara in cryosleep.

The journey was long and bitter, but the exiles made it home, never forgetting the sacrifices that





saw Kharak burn and millions die. In the wake of the Return, the Taiidan Empire fractured and collapsed. And for the first time in their history, the exiles were exiles no longer.

Many thought their hardships would end when they returned to Hiigara, but fate would not be so kind.

The Greatest Sacrifice of Karan S'jet

One of the greatest sacrifices during the Return was made by the young neuroscientist Karan S'jet. She was instrumental in designing many of the key systems aboard the Mothership, but she also had herself integrated into its data shunt.

Under the watchful guidance of Karan S'jet—the neuroscientist and living core of the Mothership that brought her people home—the Hiigarans have forged a new empire with colonies stretching across the Inner Rim, from the Great Wastelands to the Sarum system.

Although no longer joined to the Mothership, Karan's exposure to hyperspace has expanded her consciousness and extended her life. At the beginning of *Homeworld 2* she holds vigil, forever knowing that her true destiny waits for her.

Generations Have Passed

Many prophesied the Return of the Hiigarans. Some saw them as saviors, others as harbingers. Among their allies were the Bentusi, who welcomed the Hiigarans among the Unbound—those who had mastered the secret of hyperspace travel. It was the Bentusi who helped the Hiigarans return home from the sands of Kharak.

Now, ancient by mortal standards, Karan is one of the Unbound—her body and consciousness sustained by the hyperspace core that powered the Mothership. Her exposure to the void has

expanded her consciousness and prolonged her life. However, this gift comes with a heavy price for Karan—that of seeing her people suffer once again.



*At the coming of the End,
When the Trinity is once more
The Sajuuk-Khar, chosen of Sajuuk the Great
Maker, will return:*

*From the east, the Usurpers will rise,
From the void, the First Ones will vanish,
And from the west, the exiles will face their
darkest hour...*

—Book VII, the Return of Sajuuk

The Dust Wars and the Rise of the Vaygr

With the collapse of the Galactic Counsel came the Dust Wars. What started out as small border clashes soon turned to open warfare. Without warning, the Vaygr invaded the Inner Rim. At first, they attacked in small raiding parties composed

Ch. I: *Homeworld2* Fundamentals

mainly of Taiidani rebels. But soon, it became obvious that the raids were only the beginning of a larger campaign. Within months of the first raids, sightings of new ships were reported along the Inner Rim. No longer were they merely disrupting shipping and adding to the chaos of the Dust Wars. In time, the Vaygr incursions intensified into all-out invasion. One by one, star systems fell to the Vaygr, and in their wake, devastation and destruction followed.

Initially, the Hiigarans refused to interfere. Hiigara was content to ignore the troubles of the Inner Rim. It was Karan who first sensed the true threat of the Vaygr. As their attacks intensified, it became clear they were not simple invaders like the Tobar or Turanic Raiders. The Vaygr were different—they possessed a Far Jumper, and their eyes were set on Hiigara. What Karan feared the most was now reality—the coming of the End Time.

Makaan

Homeworld2 is the story of the End Time. This is because the Third Core has been found.

Under the dark influence of this core, the Taiidan have risen under a new leader, a Vaygr warrior-lord named Makaan. Although he has built upon the remnants of the Taiidan, Makaan has

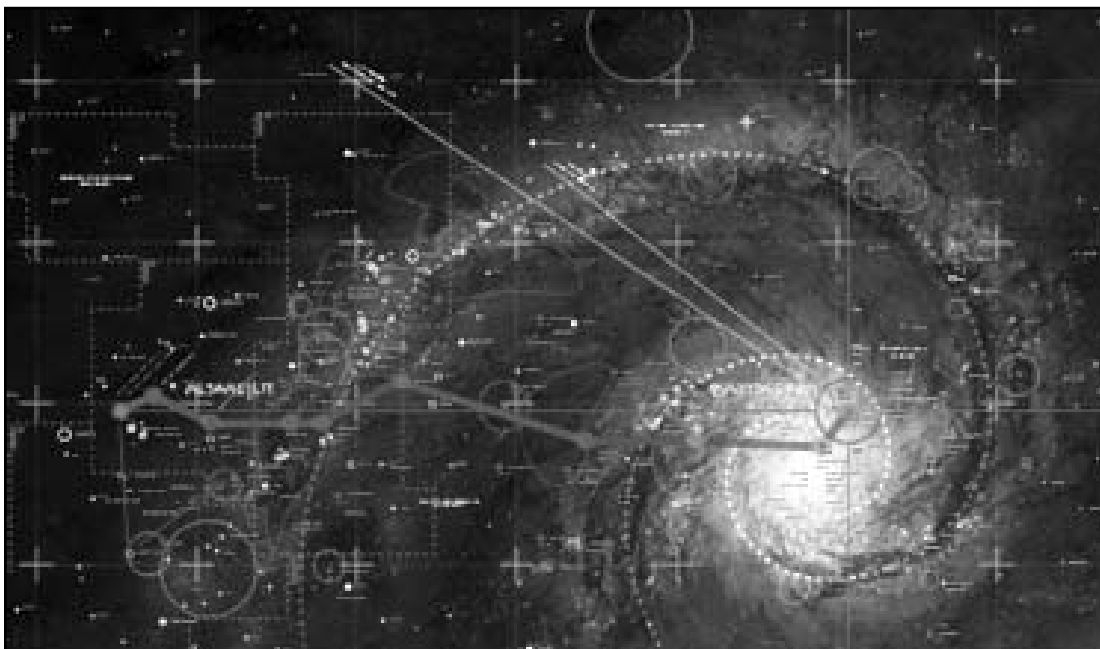
forged a new identity for himself and his followers. He calls himself the Sajuuk-Khar, the chosen one. He is to bring peace to the galaxy under the rule of a single voice, using a power never witnessed in our time. Many systems have already fallen under his shadow, and now his eyes are set upon Hiigara.



This is the evil that you must now face. The destiny of the Hiigarans rests in your hands.

The Friendship of a Sobani

A key ally in the fight against the Vaygr comes in the form of a Sobani, who joined the Hiigaran navy as captain of an Assault Frigate battle group. He's instrumental in your fight against the Vaygr, proving his loyalty to the Hiigarans despite the overwhelming odds. Captain Soban is a valiant and admirable officer, one you're sure to be pleased to have on your side.



MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS OVER HOMEWORLD

Even if you've never played *Homeworld*, this section is still important because there are a few improvements that should be familiar to any gamer, especially RTS fans.

If you've played *Homeworld*, you'll be a bit ahead of the curve, but take note of the critical improvements in *Homeworld2* that may look unfamiliar to you. For the full details behind how to use these features, refer to Chapters 4, 5, and 6. But for now, let's quickly review these upgrades to avoid confusion.

Streamlined Movement

Players no longer need to rely on the Movement Manager to move their ships. Using context-sensitive commands by right-clicking allows you to easily move ships to the intended destination. Just point and click. For more on this see Chapter 4.

Context-Sensitive Commands

Units default to the most appropriate action, based on a specific set of circumstances and dependent upon what the player clicks. When clicking on asteroids, Resource Collectors default to using the "Harvest" command. For more on this see Chapter 4.

Right-Click Menu

All available commands are accessible through a **[shift]** right-click menu. For more on this see Chapter 4.



Improved Unit AI

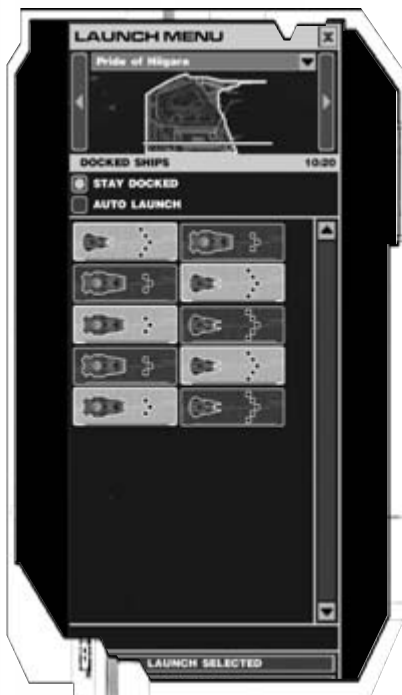
The basic unit AI is greatly improved here. For example, when a unit destroys its target, it automatically searches the local area for the next target and begins another attack. For more on this see Chapter 6.

Enhanced UI Elements

Enhancements to the Sensors Manager (like the ability to issue orders) and new features like Objective Selector Discs make it easier for the player to interface with the game. You never have to leave the game to build more ships as you did in *Homeworld*. Just press **[B]** to access the Build menu. Keep pressing it to cycle through the available ships you can build.



Press **[R]** to access the Research menu and select the technology that you want to research.



For the Launch Manager, press **[L]**, then select the ships that you want to launch. Auto launch is set to "ON" by default.



We discuss all the relevant details to these menus in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Camera Improvements

Default camera angles and panning make it easier to use the game's camera. Just move the cursor to the screen's edge to move the camera in that direction. Moving the cursor to the top of the screen moves the camera forward, and, conversely, moving the cursor to the bottom of the screen moves the camera backward. Play the game's tutorial to learn how to use the camera. On the main menu, click on "Tutorial."

RESOURCING

Space is filled with mineral-rich asteroids, and all space-faring civilizations can harvest these minerals to build what they require. Harvesting these asteroids with Resource Collectors is the principal way to earn Resource Units (RUs).



SHIP BUILDING

All of your ships are built at Production Facilities aboard Capital Vessels or Shipyards. There are unique Production Facilities for each hull class (Fighters, Corvettes, Frigates, and Capital Ships). Note that a Capital Ship must first have the Production Facility for a given hull class before it can begin building vessels in that class. Each Capital Ship has a limit on the number of Production Facilities it can support. Choose wisely.

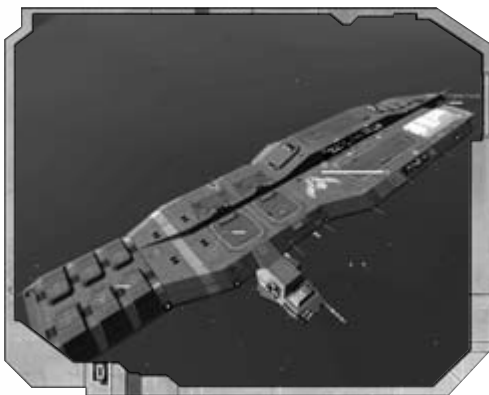
NOTE

Battlecruisers are almost a hull class unto themselves. They are so large that they can be built only at a Shipyard.

In addition to having the requisite facilities, some vessel types require research and support modules before they can be produced.

SUBSYSTEMS

Many of a Capital Ship's upgrades and capabilities are linked to a particular subsystem mounted on hardpoints on the ship's hull. In addition, Capital Ships have "integral subsystems," such as engines or weapons turrets. All of these subsystems can be targeted by an opponent. If an opponent destroys a subsystem, the target ship loses the subsystem's abilities. Subsystems play a critical role in developing a winning strategy, so if you are to achieve victory, you must completely understand how they work. Refer to Chapter 5 for more information on how they work.



A Carrier's Fighter Facility

NOTE

Integral subsystems such as engines or weapons are automatically repaired if they are destroyed.

GETTING STARTED: THE QUICK START

If you want to jump right into the game and learn about the rest of these details later, play the tutorial first and then jump into the first mission in *Homeworld 2*. However, if you want to start a multiplayer game against a computer opponent, here are the basic strategies to fend off the enemies.

- **Build more Resource Collectors.** If you only have four or five, build at least two more, then build a Mobile Refinery. Queue up these units by pressing **[B]** and then clicking on the Resource Collector icon on the Build menu.
- **Immediately after this, select your existing resourcers parked outside your Mothership** by double-clicking on one of them. Then press **[H]** to get them harvesting.
- **After you've built at least one Resource Collector, start building a Fighter Facility on your Carrier.** To do this, select the Carrier, then press **[B]** and click on the Fighter icon.
- **Once the Fighter Facility subsystem is built, click on the Interceptor icon at the top of the list.** Soon, several Interceptors appear from the bow of the Carrier. Select them to begin an attack.
- **Repeat these basic steps to unlock new ship unit types, like Corvettes and Frigates.**
- **Above all, never stop resourcing.** This is essential to a winning game.

CONCLUSION

Now that you've learned a bit of the game's background and the basics of what it takes to get started, turn to the next two chapters to understand the intricacies behind each unit and ship type.

CHAPTER 2: THE HIIGARAN FLEET ENCYCLOPEDIA

THE HIIGARAN ORDER OF BATTLE

Hiigaran combat doctrine has been highly refined during the centuries-long Dust Wars, where ferocious battles of attrition occurred throughout the galaxy. To prevail in this environment, the Hiigarans developed excellent defensive operations, along with the ability to quickly project power at a distance. This approach gives the Hiigarans a high degree of survivability and permits them to rapidly exploit tactical weaknesses wherever they are found. Superior Elint capabilities ensure that tactical advantages can be identified throughout a theater of operations.

Typical Hiigaran ORBAT reveals a force composition geared toward classic combined-arms formations. Fighters provide an outer defensive cloud around an inner defensive layer of Corvettes, while Capital Ships form the strike-group core. Support ships ensure that a high level of operational readiness can be maintained among the escort tier.

Although Hiigaran ships are slower than comparable hull types, all Hiigaran Capital-class vessels can perform tactical hyperspace jumps. This capability allows them to reach distant battlegrounds *in formation*, where their strong defensive capabilities can counteract an opponent's faster hull speed.

Strikecraft

The smallest hull type, this ship class includes Scouts, Fighters, and Attack Bombers. While these ships are highly maneuverable, their weaponry is restricted to fixed-position, kinetic munitions with

limited armor penetration. Due to the partial-coverage arcs of these weapons, Strikecraft are deployed in squadrons to provide mutual supporting fire.

SCOUT



Role: Recon/Harrier
Weaponry: 1x Kinetic Autogun in fixed-gimbal mount
Firepower: Very light
Coverage: Forward
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 480 meters/second
Maneuverability: Very high

Scouts are little more than a powerful engine strapped to the smallest cockpit in the fleet. Besides being excellent intelligence platforms, Scouts are often used to harass noncombat vessels, though this should be viewed as more of a psy-op role rather than an effective way of punching holes in hulls. The Scout chassis can be upgraded to house a directed Electromagnetic Pulse weapon that, in sufficient numbers, can temporarily disable an enemy ship.

Strengths

- Are cheap, reusable primary recon platform.
- Can outrun any enemy combat hull.
- Nuisance attacks on noncombat hulls can distract enemy command centers.

Weaknesses

- Thin armor makes Scouts a one-shot kill for many weapons.
- Weaponry is short range and of limited power.



INTERCEPTOR



Role: Fighter killer/escort
Weaponry: 1x rapid-fire Kinetic Autogun in fixed-gimbal mount
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Forward
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 325 meters/second
Maneuverability: High

The Interceptor is the smallest hull type that features offensive strike capabilities. Speed and maneuverability are maximized; thin armor plating covers only critical systems. The Interceptor is especially feared by noncombat vessels, other strike craft, and resource operations.

Strengths

- **Tightly trained squadrons automatically attack best available target.**
- **Speed and maneuverability enable strong offense capabilities vs. other fighter classes.**

Weaknesses

- **Lacks firepower to affect larger hull types.**
- **Optimal use is as a supporting attack unit—not a primary attack vehicle.**

BOMBER



Role: Anti-Capital Ship
Weaponry: 2x Bomb Launcher,
Firepower: Heavy
Coverage: Forward
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 260 meters/second
Maneuverability: High

Bombers are small, fast ships packing heavy, slow munitions. Bomber formations are best ranged against the largest ships of the line. Bombers release their fusion bombs some distance from their prey, relying on momentum to carry the load home. This tactic enables Bombers to avoid counterfire but also permits more agile targets to perform evasive maneuvers.

Strengths

- **Cheapest platform capable of destroying Capital Ships.**
- **Fusion bombs can be upgraded with designator/tracking unit.**
- **Agile enough to avoid fire from Capital Ships and Battlecruisers.**

Weaknesses

- **Slow rate of fire (ROF)—munitions can be evaded by many ship types.**
- **Vulnerable to Fighters.**

TIP

Use Bombers to disable enemy Capital Ships' subsystems. They can easily hone in on vulnerable subsystems like engines or Fighter facilities, disabling an otherwise useful Capital Ship in short order, without the time or risk of destroying it completely.

Corvette Class

With a dedicated gunnery crew and sweeping turrets, Corvettes can put a withering sustained fire on target. Their augmented reactor mass makes them only slightly less agile than Strikecraft while packing a much larger punch.

GUNSHIP



Role: Fighter killer
Weaponry: Twin "Vulcan" Kinetic Autogun turret
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Medium
Armor: Light
Max. Velocity: 215 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium high

The bane of Fighter squadrons, Gunships are agile enough to quickly get within range of their quarry. Then, dual turret-mounted, hypervelocity Autoguns sweep from target to target with devastating speed and accuracy.

Strengths

- Turret-mounted weapons track quickly from target to target.
- Deadly against all type of enemy Strikecraft.
- Use in generous numbers to improve effectiveness.

Weaknesses

- Lacks the punch to engage anything heavier than a Corvette.

PULSAR GUNSHIP



Role: Corvette/Capital Ship killer
Weaponry: 1x Pulsar turret
Firepower: Medium
Coverage: Full
Armor: Light
Max. Velocity: 215 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium high

Designed from the skids up as multipurpose vessels, Pulsar Gunships pack enough firepower to take on Capital Ships, combined with the speed to hunt down Corvette-class hulls.

The Pulsar Gunship utilizes a shortwave Ion Beam cannon, dubbed the "Pulsar" by Hiigaran scientists, as its main weapon. What it lacks in power it makes up in size, rate of fire, and coverage. Mounted on the Gunship chassis, the pulsar turret has 360 degrees of coverage, allowing it to target Corvettes effectively. The Pulsar is also powerful enough to punch through Frigate armor.

Strengths

- Possesses the speed to engage and pursue Corvette-class ships.
- Has sufficient firepower to engage Capital Ships.
- Multirole design provides tasking flexibility.

Weaknesses

- Though it performs several tasks well, single-purpose vessels can outclass it in any particular role.



MINELAYER



Role: Battlefield preparation
Weaponry: 1x Kinetic Autogun,
1x Burst Mine Deployment System
Firepower: Very light
Coverage: Forward
Armor: Light
Max. Velocity: 215 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium high

This utility Corvette has a seemingly unlimited payload of shaped-charge mines for creating static defenses. It also functions in a mine-detecting and clearing role when encountering enemy mines.

Strengths

- A dense minefield can effectively deny opponents access to a limited area (such as a rich resource zone)—at least until they've cleared the mines. Mines automatically avoid friendly ships, provided that their ship designation beacons are operative.

Weaknesses

- Mines decay over time, so minefields need to be maintained to be effective.

Frigates

The smallest hull class to feature crew reserves and sophisticated fire-control systems, Frigates often make up the bulk of a fleet. Increased hull size provides more survivability than Strikecraft- or Corvette-class hulls, which often explode just a moment after calling for repairs.

ION CANNON FRIGATE



Role: Anti-Capital Ship
Weaponry: 1x Ion Cannon
Firepower: Medium
Coverage: Medium
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 150 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

Although it takes some time for this Frigate to charge weapons and bring them to bear, the firepower delivered outweighs any Directed Energy Weapon (DEW) in this class. There are few things an admiral might find more disturbing than a battery of Ion Cannons lining up against a Capital Ship formation.

Strengths

- Massive energy discharge is extremely potent against large Capital Ships.

Weaknesses

- Low maneuverability requires a strong escort; these vessels are unable to engage Strikecraft with any effect.

Ch. 2: The Hiigaran Fleet Encyclopedia

TORPEDO FRIGATE



Role: Corvette/Capital Ship Killer
Weaponry: 2x Torpedo Launcher
Firepower: Heavy
Coverage: High
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 160 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

This multi-purpose Frigate is a devastatingly effective addition to any strike group hunting Capital-class ships. It fires two medium-range homing torpedoes that can be outfitted as either the standard Corvette-killing cluster torpedo or the more powerful Capital Ship torpedo. Only a few need make it through an enemy's layered defenses to have a devastating effect on Capital formations.

Strengths

- When used as a standoff weapon, this ship can engage the enemy well out of the range of counterfire.
- Can be upgraded to fire Capital Ship Torpedoes

Weaknesses

- Low Rate of Fire.

FLAK FRIGATE



Role: Anti-Fighter
Weaponry: 2x Kinetic Burst Cannon (top mounted and bottom mounted)
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Full
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 160 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

The typical ship-of-the-line used as a picket ship in defensive operations and the workhorse of any assault. The Hiigaran Flak Frigate combines adequate speed, armor, and firepower to deal with almost any situation. Alone, the Flak Frigate is vulnerable to Fighters and other Frigates. In a Squadron or Strike Force, it is more than a match for Corvettes, Fighters, and even heavier Capital Ships.

Strengths

- High ROF and high-speed weaponry with burst-effect munitions decimate Strikecraft formations.

Weaknesses

- Flak bursts lack the power to penetrate the armor of larger hull classes.



MARINE FRIGATE



Role: Boarding/commandeering
Weaponry: 1x Kinetic Burst
Cannon Turret
Firepower: Light
Coverage: High
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 150 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

Originally a modified cargo transport, the Marine Frigate has evolved into a fast, highly armored delivery vehicle used to insert Hiigaran Marines into hostile ships. The Marines are highly trained in raiding, disabling, and gaining control of enemy vessels. Given enough time, they can gain control of Mothership-class assets, giving Hiigaran Navy enemies a very nasty surprise.

Strengths

- Can take control of the largest Capital Ships, including Mothership-class vessels.

Weaknesses

- Limited armament and limited defenses that won't last long without support/diversionary tactics.

DEFENSE FIELD FRIGATE



Role: Capital Ship Defense
Weaponry: 1x Kinetic Burst
Cannon Turret
Firepower: Light
Coverage: High
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 160 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

The Hiigaran Navy has withstood incredible odds on many occasions thanks to this Frigate. Generating an intense localized magnetic field, the Defense Field Frigate is able to turn away most weapon fire from ships within its protective sphere. The power signature of this field is so high that it can only be used for short periods of time. Learning when and where to use this technology is the key.

Strengths

- Can significantly decrease the amount of damage a Capital Ship formation takes, which can tip the balance in an otherwise evenly matched battle.

Weaknesses

- Expensive, and the field takes a significant amount of time to recharge, so multiple ships are required to maintain a constant field.

Ch. 2: The Hiigaran Fleet Encyclopedia

Capital Ships

This hull class contains the largest ships of the line—ships designed to project power and provide grid dominance. Hiigaran Capital Ships are intended to form the heart of a strike force, with protective screens of Interceptors and Corvettes. On their own, Capital Ships' expensive hulls are vulnerable to Strikecraft.

SUBSYSTEMS ON CAPITAL SHIPS

All Capital Ships have subsystems. Some, like the Destroyer, have only innate engine subsystems. Others, like the Carrier Mothership, have both innate and buildable subsystems (like hyperspace, research, cloak generators, and ship-building facilities). These subsystems provide for flexibility in how you customize your fleet's abilities, but they also expose a weakness to your enemy. The destruction of a subsystem can cause your fleet to

fall behind in production, researching, or movement. Subsystems are described in detail in Chapter Five.

TIP

Watch out for bombers that attack a subsystem with improved bombs. They can disable a huge asset of your fleet in only a few shots.

DESTROYER



Sleek, deadly, and designed to take a beating, the Hiigaran Destroyer is in every sense a heavy-hitter. Turning broadside to its target, the Destroyer unleashes its four heavy cannons and twin Capital Ship torpedo launchers in a withering attack few ships can withstand for long.

Strengths

- High coverage, high ROF.

Weaknesses

- Slow
- Vulnerable to Bombers.

Role: Anti-Frigate

Weaponry: 2x Torpedo Launcher, 4x Kinetic AutoBurst Cannon turrets (front, rear, top, bottom)

Firepower: Heavy

Coverage: Full

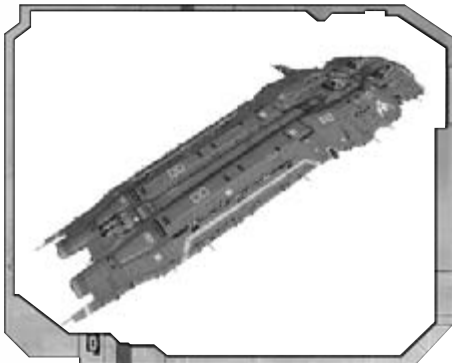
Armor: Heavy

Max. Velocity: 115 meters/second

Maneuverability: Medium low



BATTLECRUISER



Role: Grid dominance
Weaponry: 2x Heavy Ion Beam Turret, 4x Heavy "Arbiter" Cannon, 4x Pulsar Beam Turrets
Firepower: Heavy
Coverage: Full
Armor: Heavy
Max. Velocity: 69 meters/second
Maneuverability: Low

The largest combat ship in the Hiigaran Navy. Heavy Ion Beam turrets and Arbiter Cannons lay waste to Capital Ships at long range. A strike craft bay and a complement of four Pulsar Turrets enable the Battlecruiser to engage strike groups intent on disabling engines, weapons, or ability subsystems. With proper Frigate and Corvette support, the Battlecruiser is the heavy-hitter of many fleet engagements.

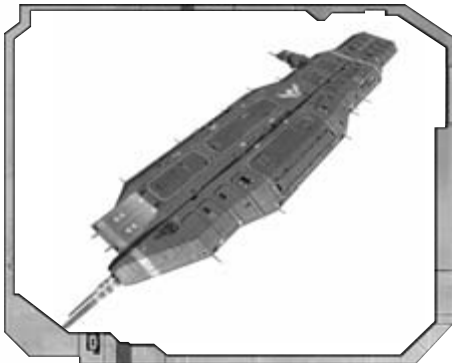
Strengths

- Heavy weapons have a range greater than that of some other ships' sensors.

Weaknesses

- Expensive, relatively slow to move into position.
- Bombers can make short work of Battlecruiser engines and weapon subsystems if not properly supported.

CARRIER



Role: Forward Production and Resourcing
Weaponry: Hull Defense
Firepower: Minimal
Coverage: Low
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 75 meters/second
Maneuverability: Low

The Hiigaran Carrier is perhaps the most versatile ship in the fleet. Properly outfitted, the Carrier can build and repair Fighters, Corvettes, Frigates, and Resource-class ships. It can store 10 strike-craft squadrons and is very effective as a mobile resource drop-off point. It features two ability subsystem slots that can be used for whatever purposes Fleet Command sees fit.

Strengths

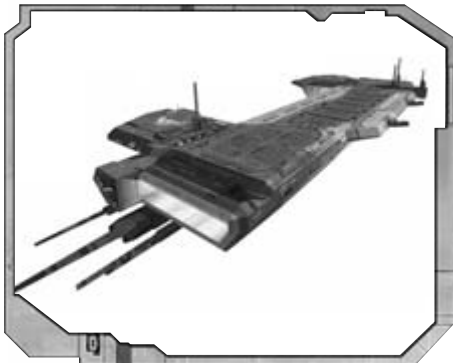
- Carriers bring production facilities close to the scene of battle, decreasing response time.

Weaknesses

- Essentially a large floating factory, a Carrier is relatively defenseless on its own.

Ch. 2: The Hiigaran Fleet Encyclopedia

SHIPYARD



Role: Build facility
Weaponry: Hull Defense
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Low
Armor: Heavy
Max. Velocity: 15 meters/second
Maneuverability: Very low

A production ship so massive it cannot be built by the Mothership, the Hiigaran Shipyard is a slow-moving behemoth capable of building any ship in the Hiigaran fleet. It must be constructed in large orbital facilities and then hyperspaced to the front. With its massive foundries, the Shipyard is the only facility capable of building Battlecruisers.

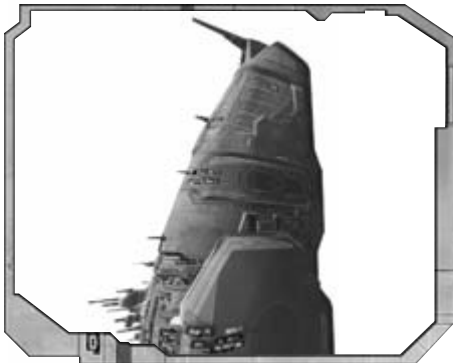
Strengths

- Allows you to build Battlecruisers, and frees up production or research subsystem slots on other build facilities and Capital Ships.

Weaknesses

- Expensive, effectively immobile, and vulnerable to Bombers.

MOTHERSHIP



Role: Build facility
Weaponry: Hull Defense
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Full
Armor: Heavy
Max. Velocity: 40 meters/second
Maneuverability: Low

The *Pride of Hiigara* is the largest Mothership vessel ever built by the Hiigarans. It can produce and build nearly all ships in the Hiigaran Navy and has ample slots available for the numerous ability subsystems available to the fleet.

Strengths

- Relatively mobile production facility.

Weaknesses

- Subsystems vulnerable to Bombers.
- Vulnerable to Battlecruisers and Frigates.



The Pride of Hiigara

The *Pride of Hiigara* is a new Mothership, one that was built at the secret naval base in the Tanis Derelict. The old Mothership—the one that carried the exiles from Hiigara—remained in orbit around Hiigara for many years after the return of the exiles. Shown here in its



berth at Tanis, the *Pride of Hiigara* is outfitted with the latest technology and some experimental systems. Although the Mothership is not yet complete, our story begins with its emergency launch when Tanis' location is compromised. The Tanis Derelict, a part of the ancient and enormous Progenitor Empire, provided a natural berth for the new Mothership's secret construction.

The *Pride of Hiigara* was designed by Karan S'Jet during the voyage from Kharak to Hiigara. In essence, the Mothership became her body, and she immediately perceived inefficiencies, design flaws, and other shortcomings of the original design. Thus, she began work on a new design for a future Mothership during that trek across the galaxy.

Noncombat

PROBE



A one-shot device, the Probe can be deployed to any position on the map with its fast, single-burn engine. Once positioned, it provides sensor data on all enemy ships within a 50- to 60-kilometer radius—depending upon the electromagnetic field, dust cloud, or other debris in the area. Once positioned, it cannot be moved again.

Role: Electronic intelligence
Weaponry: None
Firepower: N/A
Coverage: N/A
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 600 meters/second
Maneuverability: None

Ch. 2: The Hiigaran Fleet Encyclopedia

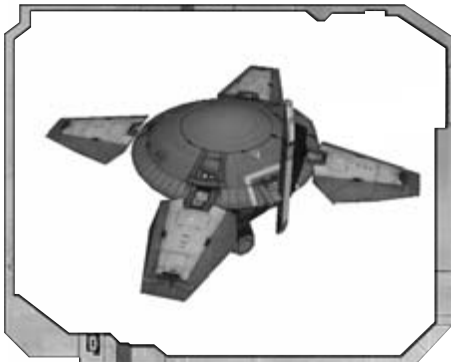
SENSORS DISTORTION PROBE



Role: Counterintelligence
Weaponry: None
Firepower: N/A
Coverage: N/A
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 600 meters/second
Maneuverability: None

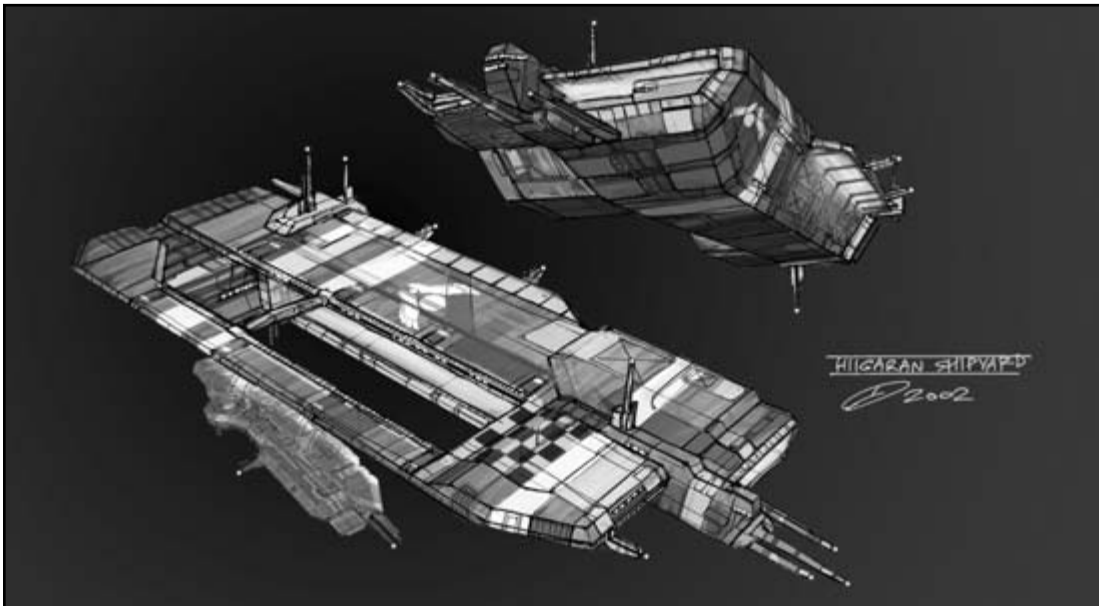
Like the Probe, this can be positioned to any location on the map with its single-burn engine. In place, the Distortion Probe emits spurious signals, effectively disrupting enemy sensors within its radius. Fleet activity can be masked by the use of this probe, but once positioned, it can't be moved again.

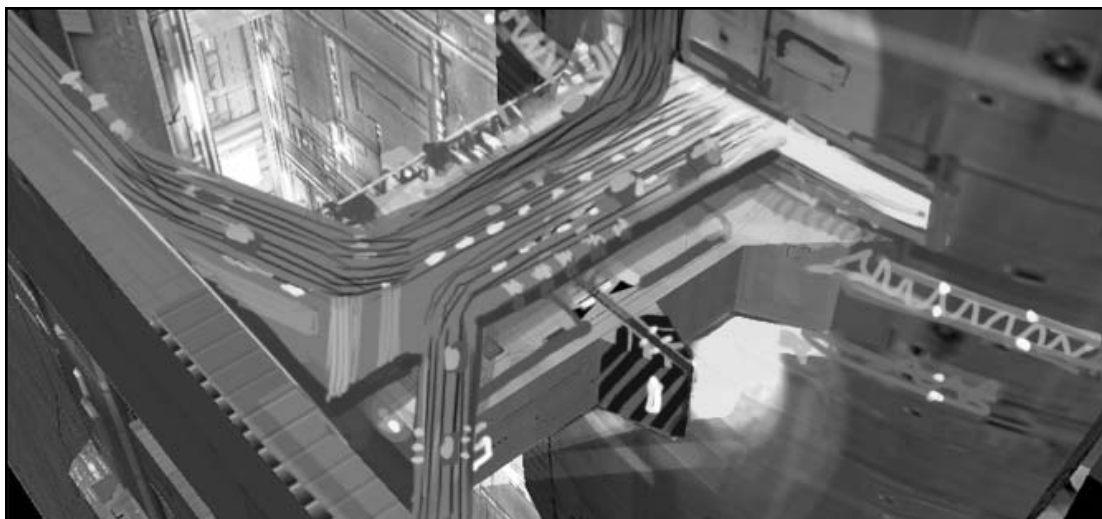
PROXIMITY SENSOR



Role: Countercounterintelligence
Weaponry: None
Firepower: N/A
Coverage: N/A
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 600 meters/second
Maneuverability: None

This reveals any cloaked ships within the sensor's radius. It has a single-burn engine.





RESOURCE COLLECTOR



Role: Harvesting/repair
Weaponry: None
Firepower: N/A
Coverage: N/A
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 275 meters/second
Maneuverability: High

The Hiigaran Resource Collector is a vessel roughly the size of a Corvette. It has arms to grab various types of materials that can be turned into RUs when dropped off at a refinery station. When upgraded, the Collector can perform repairs on Frigate and Capital-class ships and is therefore an essential part of any combat fleet.

MOBILE REFINERY



Role: Harvesting/repair
Weaponry: Hull Defense
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Low
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 225 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

Able to dock two Resource Collectors at once, a Mobile Refinery speeds up harvesting operations. Since you'd regularly need a Capital Ship around to service the Resource Collectors, also think of Mobile Refineries as a way of freeing up those vessels to move away from the harvesting ops.

Platforms

Gun Platforms are a cheap, effective way of adding strength to location defense, such as near rich resource zones.

GUN PLATFORM



The Gun Platform carries the same weaponry as the Gunship but at less than half the cost and two-thirds the build time. A single-burn engine puts the package on point.

Strengths

- Same weapons and sensors as the Gunship at half the price.

Weaknesses

- Outranged by larger vessels, it can be destroyed with impunity.

Role: Anti-Fighter location defense

Weaponry: Twin "Vulcan" Kinetic Autogun turrets

Firepower: Light

Coverage: Medium

Armor: Light

Max. Velocity: 200 meters/second

Maneuverability: None

ION GUN PLATFORM



A more advanced version of the Gun Platform, the Ion Beam Platform unleashes four high-energy ion beams at any Frigate or Capital Ship within range. Once deployed, it cannot be moved again.

Strengths

- Powerful ion beams weapons systems are a strong deterrent to enemy Frigates and Capital Ships.

Weaknesses

- Outranged by larger vessels, it can be destroyed with impunity.

Role: Anti-Capital, anti-Frigate, location defense

Weaponry: Twin Ion Cannon turret

Firepower: Medium

Coverage: Medium

Armor: Light

Max. Velocity: 200 meters/second

Maneuverability: None

CHAPTER 3: THE VAYGR FLEET ENCYCLOPEDIA

THE VAYGR ORDER OF BATTLE

The Vaygr fleet is designed to quickly develop local supremacy by outgunning hostile vessels from the first moment of contact, before an opponent's superior flexibility can become a factor.

Unlike the Hiigaran, the Vaygr have Strikecraft-class vessels that are more than able to take on enemy Corvettes. Likewise, their Heavy Missile Frigate is a low-tech platform, available without any supporting research, but it can be deadly against the largest enemy Capital Ships.

A hardwired approach is deeply rooted in Vaygr combat doctrine. Vaygr ship designs are generally more limited than their opponents'. Carriers, for instance, can develop only one Production Facility, restricting their ability to adapt to battlefield conditions. On the other hand, Carriers are cheap to produce. Similarly, Strikecraft feature relatively unsophisticated fire-control abilities. Therefore, the Vaygr commander sends along a single-purpose Command Corvette to improve firing accuracy.

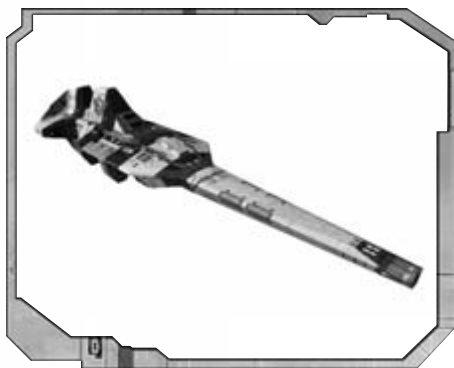
It's been often suggested that Vaygr Fleet Command would do well to increase its flexibility. But, as a Vaygr warlord once said, "Perhaps we are too busy winning battles to learn how to change our ways."

Strikecraft

Consisting of Scouts, Bombers, Assault Craft, and Lance Fighters, these ships are comparable to their Hiigaran counterparts—with one exception. The Vaygr Lance Fighter is peerless in its role as an Anti-Frigate Strikecraft.

Due to the partial-coverage arcs of their fixed-mount weaponry, Strikecraft are deployed in squadrons to provide mutual supporting fire.

SCOUT



Built for high-speed, flyby recon missions, the Vaygr Scout can outrun anything it might come up against. It achieves this goal by sacrificing every other feature. It is poorly armed and has surprisingly low maneuverability for such a tiny hull.

Strengths

- Fastest ship in the Vaygr Fleet.

Weaknesses

- No armor and ineffective weaponry.

Role: Reconnaissance and scouting

Weaponry: none

Firepower: 1x Light "Vhynni"

Cannon: Anti-Scout

Coverage: N/A

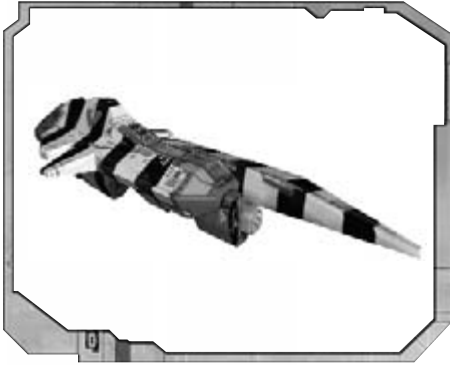
Armor: None

Max. Velocity: 420 meters/second

Maneuverability: High

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ASSAULT CRAFT



Role: Basic Fighter Squadron
Weaponry: 1x Rapid-Fire Kinetic.
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Forward
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 325 meters/second
Maneuverability: High

Designed for a tactical supremacy role, the Assault Craft is best pitted against other Strikecraft—especially Bombers. In a support role, it's effective against Capital Ship subsystems. It may also be used to conduct raids against resourcing operations.

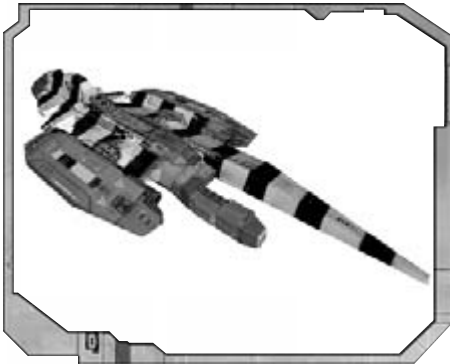
Strengths

- High speed lends itself to a rapid-response role.

Weaknesses

- Lacks the firepower to be effective against Capital Ships.

BOMBER



Role: Anti-Capital Ship Fighter Squadron
Weaponry: 2x Plasma Bomb Launcher
Firepower: Medium
Coverage: Forward
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 260 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

A deadly combination of maneuverability and destructive firepower, the Bomber is nimble enough to evade fire from most Frigates and class ships, and powerful enough to pose them a serious threat. Their twin fusion bomb launchers release highly volatile bottled plasma that burns through hull plating, ignites munition stores, and overloads computer systems. No ship can last long without significant support.

Strengths

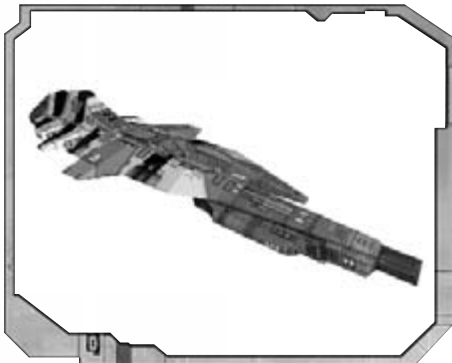
- Powerful weapons on a cheap hull.

Weaknesses

- Defensive vulnerabilities all but require local tactical supremacy before this vessel can be deployed.



LANCE FIGHTER



Role: Anti-Capital Ship Fighter Squadron.
Weaponry: 1x Plasma Lance
Firepower: Medium
Coverage: Forward
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 260 meters/second
Maneuverability: High

A heavily modified assault chassis allows for the long barreled lance beam weapon system relied upon by Vaygr raiding parties. Based on mining technology, the plasma lance is a volatile cutting beam that makes short work of Corvette armor and Capital Ship subsystems. Disabling a Carrier's engines to allow for easy infiltration is one of the tactics made successful by this unit.

Strengths

- The only strikecraft-mounted beam weapon in existence.

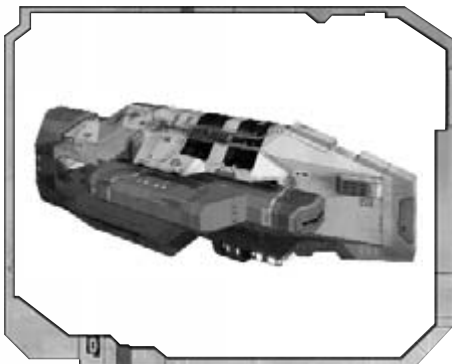
Weaknesses

- Vulnerable to cheaper, faster strikecraft.

Corvette Class

This mid-tier ship class provides support for fleet activities, and it offers a more survivable platform than Strikecraft.

LASER CORVETTE



Role: Anti-Capital Ship Corvette Squadron
Weaponry: 2x Vaygr Laser Cannons
Firepower: Medium
Coverage: High
Armor: Light
Max. Velocity: 215 meters/second
Maneuverability: High

The bigger brother of the Lance Fighter, the Laser Corvette is one of the few beam-weapon equipped ships in the Vaygr fleet. It combines speed and quick turns to deliver withering laser fire into Frigates and Capital Ships from its forward-facing cannons. These ships are tough, fast, and hard-hitting. A Frigate convoy without proper support won't last long against a coordinated attack.

Strengths

- Fast-moving ships deliver an accurate and devastating point attack.

Weaknesses

- Light armor makes this ship susceptible to homing missile and torpedo attacks.

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MISSILE CORVETTE



Role: Heavy Corvette Squadron
Weaponry: 2x Concussion Missile Launcher
Firepower: Medium
Coverage: High
Armor: Light
Max. Velocity: 215 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium low

The Vaygr Missile Corvette is a Frigate and Corvette hunter. These ships launch fast-moving, high-yield warheads designed to send powerful shockwaves through enemy ships, disrupting systems, and shattering hull armor.

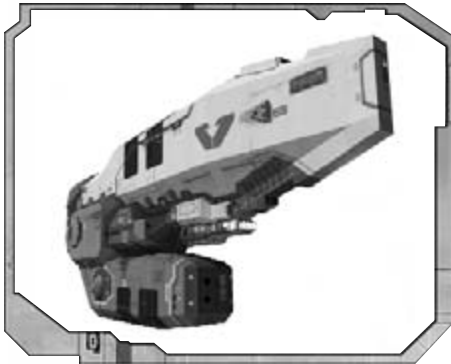
Strengths

- Fast, powerful missiles have the range to fire from a covered position.

Weaknesses

- Light armor makes these vessels targets for high-powered weaponry on Capital Ships.

MINELAYER



Role: Minelaying/Mine Clearing
Weaponry: 1x Magnetic Limpet Mine Deployment System
Firepower: Special
Coverage: None
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 215 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

A well-armored Corvette with a payload of magnetic limpet mines. The Minelayer lays mines in a grid pattern by moving to a point in space and releasing a mine in that location. It also functions in a mine-detecting and clearing role when encountering enemy mines.

Strengths

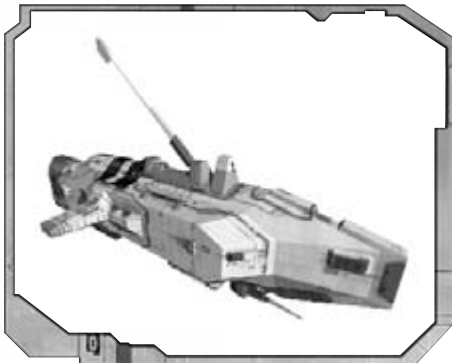
- A dense minefield can effectively deny opponents access to a limited area (such as a rich resource zone)—at least until they've cleared the mines. Mines automatically avoid friendly ships, provided that their ship designation beacons are operative.

Weaknesses

- Static defenses are useless if an opponent can avoid them.
- Static mines decay over time, and loss of relative positional data renders them useless.



COMMAND CORVETTE



Role: Command
Weaponry: None
Firepower: None
Coverage: N/A
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 215 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium high

A high-speed Command, Control, and Communications (C³) vessel, the Command Corvette links together the fire-control computers of all vessels under its command. This increases each ship's targeting accuracy.

What this ship lacks in firepower is made up in sensors equipment, armor, and the bonus it gives to friendly units within range. The antenna array sprouting from the hull both coordinates attacks and provides a morale boost, as the Command Corvette more often than not is crewed by ranking officers and favorites of the Crusade's warlord.

Strengths

- Increases effectiveness of other vessels.

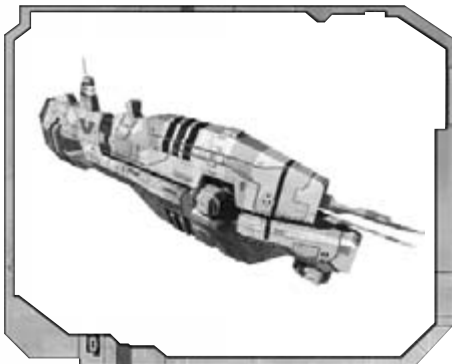
Weaknesses

- Lack of firepower and armor make it a prime target.

Frigates

Featuring redundant systems and crew reserves, Frigates are designed to maintain a high level of operational readiness under fire. The complete absence of any targetable subsystems makes Frigates a hard objective. They cannot be taken down; they can only be taken out.

ASSAULT FRIGATE



Role: Corvette and Fighter Killer
Weaponry: 3x Heavy Flechette
"Attrition" Cannon, 1x Light
Concussion Missile
Firepower: Medium
Coverage: High
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 160 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

The Vaygr Assault Frigate, unlike its Hiigaran equivalent, is designed to support Strikecraft rather than defend against them. Its turrets are forward facing and fire long, thin sliverlike flechettes at extremely high speed, cutting through enemy craft with disturbing ease.

Strengths

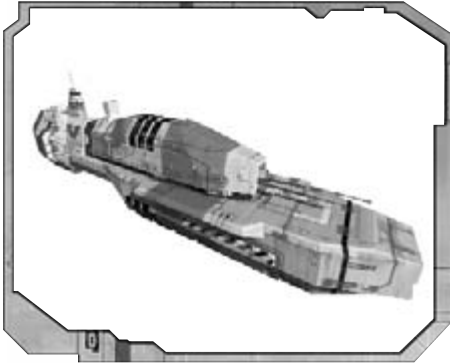
- Powerful weaponry on a well-armored, fast hull.

Weaknesses

- Ineffective against Frigates and Capital Ships

Ch. 3: The Vaygr Fleet Encyclopedia

HEAVY MISSILE FRIGATE



Role: Capital Ship and Frigate Killer

Weaponry: 2x Fusion Missile
"Jaakul" Battery, 1x Light
Concussion Missile mount

Firepower: High

Coverage: Forward

Armor: Medium

Max. Velocity: 150 meters/second

Maneuverability: Low

While the Vaygr rely primarily on the speed and power of their fighter and Corvette-class ships, do not underestimate the Heavy Missile Frigate as a serious threat to any enemy of the Eastern Fringe. Firing two heavy fusion missiles from its enormous bay, the Heavy Missile Frigate can wipe out enemy Frigate lines and, in sufficient numbers, take down Carriers and Destroyers.

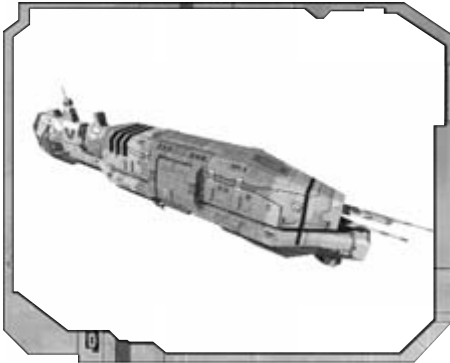
Strengths

- Attacks Capital Ships at long range.

Weaknesses

- Strikecraft easily outmaneuver around this vessel as they cut it to pieces.

INFILTRATION FRIGATE



Role: Capturing Enemy Units

Weaponry: 1x Light Flechette
"Furkan" Cannon, 1x Light
Concussion Missile,
1x Infiltrator Pod Bay

Firepower: Special

Coverage: Medium

Armor: Medium

Max. Velocity: 230 meters/second

Maneuverability: Medium

One of the deadliest ships in the Vaygr fleet, the Infiltrator Frigate relies on speed to evade enemy fire long enough to swoop down over the hull of an enemy Capital Ship and release Infiltrator Pods. These are cheap one-way trips for Vaygr Insertion teams who cut through the hull and battle the crew for supremacy of the ship. There's no return for these soldiers, which gives them a unique incentive to get the job done.

Strengths

- The very sight of Infiltration Frigates is often enough to distract opponents command.
- Can take control of the largest enemy ships.

Weaknesses

- Relies on armor and light defense weaponry to defend itself.



Capital Ship Class

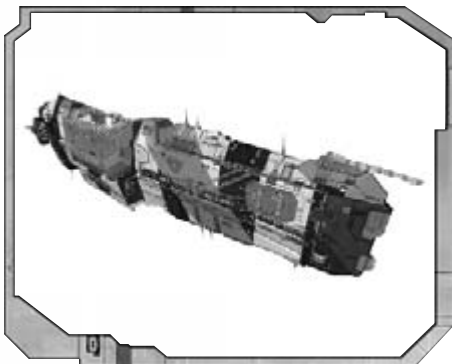
Power projection and strategic dominance are seldom possible without a core of Capital Ships providing a fleet with backbone and logistics support.

SUBSYSTEMS ON CAPITAL SHIPS

All Capital Ships have subsystems. Some, like the Destroyer, have only innate engine subsystems. Others, like the Carrier Mothership, have both innate and buildable subsystems (like hyperspace, research, cloak generators, and ship-building facilities). These subsystems provide for flexibility in

how you customize your fleet's abilities but they also expose a weakness to your enemy. The destruction of a subsystem can cause your fleet to fall behind in production, researching, or movement. Subsystems are described in detail in Chapter Five.

CARRIER



Role: Power Projection/
Production
Weaponry: Hull Defense
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Full
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 75 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

The Vaygr Carrier is the core of the Vaygr Fleet. Unlike the Hiigaran Carrier, it only has one production facility, so choose well how you build your subsystems. It can store 10 Strikecraft squadrons and is very effective as a mobile resource drop-off point. It features two ability subsystem slots that can be used for whatever purposes you see fit.

Strengths

- Provides a cheap mobile production platform for forward staging areas.

Weaknesses

- Lack of armor and short-range weaponry makes it vulnerable to attack.



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DESTROYER



Role: Capital Class Anti-Frigate/Capital Ship
Weaponry: 2x Heavy Arbalest Cannon, 4x Heavy Fusion Missile "Jaakul" Battery
Firepower: Heavy
Coverage: Full
Armor: Heavy
Max. Velocity: 115 meters/second
Maneuverability: Low

The Vaygr Destroyer is perhaps the most effective Frigate killer ever designed. A battery of four Heavy Fusion Missile Launchers and two massive cannons, when concentrated on one ship, inflicts massive damage in short order. Its off-axis hull gives the ship a distinctive profile.

Strengths

- Heavy armor and powerful weapons make this ship extremely powerful for its cost.

Weaknesses

- Slow, susceptible to Frigate strike groups when used alone.

BATTLECRUISER



Role: Strategic Supremacy/Capital Ship Killer
Weaponry: Trinity Cannon, 8x Fusion Missile "Jaakul" Battery, 4x Lance Beam Turrets
Firepower: Heavy
Coverage: Full
Armor: Heavy
Max. Velocity: 69 meters/second
Maneuverability: Low

One of the deadliest ships in current service anywhere in the galaxy. A Strikecraft bay for transport and repair of assault and Corvette-class craft supported by four lance beam turrets provide ample point defense, allowing the Battlecruiser to direct it's battery of eight Heavy Fusion Missile Launchers and enormous Trinity Cannon on Capital- and Supercapital-class enemy vessels. Based off of recovered Progenitor technology that the Vaygr don't fully understand, the Trinity Cannon is the avatar of Makaan's will in full-scale engagements.

Strengths

- Wide range of weapons to target any vessel it might be facing.

Weaknesses

- High cost



FLAGSHIP



Role: Flagship
Weaponry: Hull Defense
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Full
Armor: Heavy
Max. Velocity: 40 meters/second
Maneuverability: Low

Makaan's Flagship is a massive vessel on the same scale as the *Pride of Hiigara*. Housing the core found in the Hethlim Ice Fields, it can Far Jump to remote systems, build, store, and repair ships friendly to the fleet. Like the *Pride of Hiigara*, it has ample slots available for the numerous production and ability subsystems.

Strengths

- Heavily armored, able to build nearly every ship in the Vaygr fleet.

Weaknesses

- Low-speed and light defensive weaponry require this vessel to stay out of harm's way at any cost.

SHIPYARD



Role: Build facility
Weaponry: Hull Defense
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Low
Armor: Heavy
Max. Velocity: 15 meters/second
Maneuverability: Very low

A production ship so massive it cannot be built by the Flagship, the Vaygr Shipyard is a slow-moving behemoth capable of building any ship in the Vaygr fleet. It must be constructed in large orbital facilities and then hyperspaced to the front.

Strengths

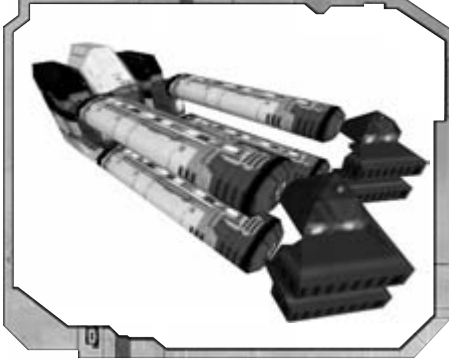
- Allows you to build Battlecruisers and frees up production slots on other build facilities and Capital Ships.

Weaknesses

- Expensive, effectively immobile, and vulnerable to Bombers.

Noncombat

HYPERSPACE GATE



Role: Transport Infrastructure
Weaponry: None
Firepower: None
Coverage: N/A
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 600 meters/second
Maneuverability: N/A

When linked with a second Hyperspace Gate it allows friendly ships to jump between the two locations.

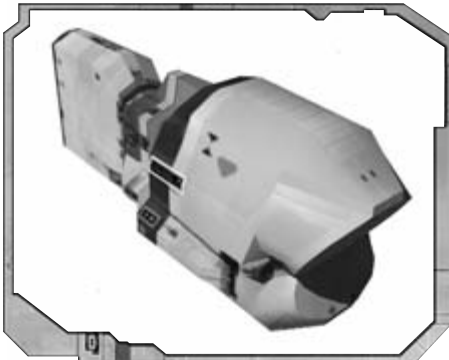
PROBE



Role: Electronic intelligence
Weaponry: None
Firepower: N/A
Coverage: N/A
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 600 meters/second
Maneuverability: None

A one-shot device, the Probe can be deployed to any position on the map with its fast, single-burn engine. Once positioned, it provides sensor data on all enemy ships within a 50- to 60-kilometer radius—depending upon the electromagnetic field, dust cloud, or other debris in the area. Once positioned, it cannot be moved again.

PROXIMITY SENSOR

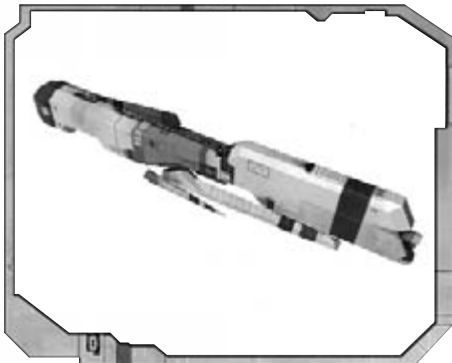


Role: Counter-counterintelligence
Weaponry: None
Firepower: N/A
Coverage: N/A
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 600 meters/second
Maneuverability: None

This reveals any cloaked ships within the sensor's radius. It has a single-burn engine.



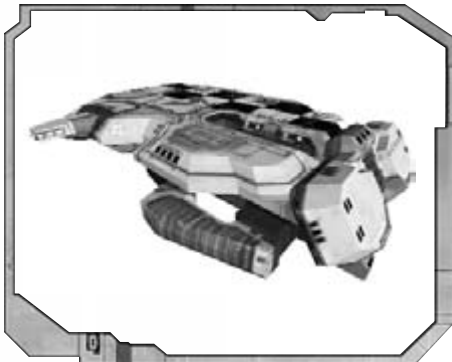
SENSORS DISTORTION PROBE



Role: Counterintelligence
Weaponry: None
Firepower: N/A
Coverage: N/A
Armor: None
Max. Velocity: 600 meters/second
Maneuverability: None

This can be positioned to any location on the map with its single-burn engine. In place, the Distortion Probe emits spurious signals, effectively disrupting enemy sensors for a 50- to 60-kilometer radius. Fleet activity can be masked by the use of this Probe, but once positioned, it can't be moved again.

RESOURCE COLLECTOR



Role: Harvesting
Weaponry: None
Firepower: None
Coverage: N/A
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 275 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

The Vaygr Resource Collector is a vessel roughly the size of a Corvette. It has arms to grab various types of materials that can be turned into RUs when dropped off at a refinery station. When upgraded, the Collector can perform repairs on Frigate and Capital-class ships and is therefore an essential part of any combat fleet.

Strengths

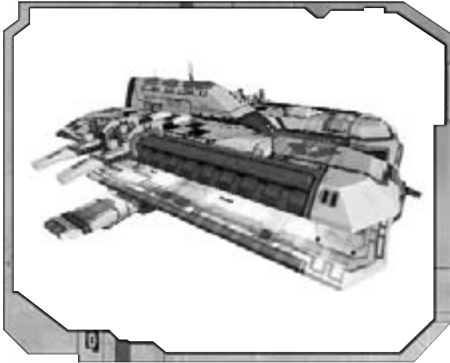
- Good armor allows it to survive spoiling attacks until escorts can respond.

Weaknesses

- Unarmed, relatively slow, and lacking agility, it relies on an escort to protect it as it performs its critical tasks.

Ch. 3: The Vaygr Fleet Encyclopedia

MOBILE REFINERY



Role: Harvesting Support
Weaponry: 8x Hull Defense Gun
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Full
Armor: Medium
Max. Velocity: 225 meters/second
Maneuverability: Medium

Able to dock two Resource Collectors at once, a Mobile Refinery speeds up harvesting operations. Since you'd regularly need a Capital Ship around to service the Resource Collectors, also think of Mobile Refineries as a way of freeing up those vessels to move away from the harvesting ops.

Platforms

Gun Platforms are a cheap, effective way of adding strength to location defense, such as near rich resource zones.

GUN PLATFORM



Role: Anti-Fighter location defense
Weaponry: Twin Kinetic Autogun turrets
Firepower: Light
Coverage: Medium
Armor: Light
Max. Velocity: 200 meters/second
Maneuverability: None

A cheap, quickly produced method of putting weapons on a station, the Gun Platform is an effective way to quickly build up point-defense firepower. A single-burn engine puts the package on target.

Strengths

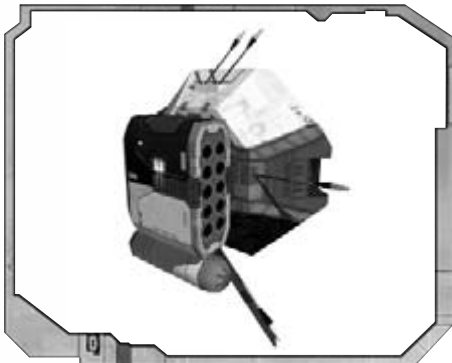
- Cheap platform for attacking Strikecraft.
- High-speed, single-burn engine is suited for spoiling attacks deep behind enemy lines.

Weaknesses

- Outranged by larger vessels, it can be destroyed with impunity.



HEAVY MISSILE PLATFORM



Role: Anti-Capital, anti-Frigate,
location defense

Weaponry: 2x Heavy Fusion
"Jaakul" Missile Battery

Firepower: Medium

Coverage: Medium

Armor: Light

Max. Velocity: 200 meters/second

Maneuverability: None

Designed to complement the Gun Platform, this device packs the range and heavy firepower to take on Capital Ships.

Strengths

- Cheap platform for attacking Capital Ships.
- High-speed, single-burn engine is suited for spoiling attacks deep behind enemy lines.

Weaknesses

- Vulnerable to Strikecraft.

CONCLUSION

Now that you've had a chance to study the Vaygr fleet, turn to the next chapter, "The Basics of Using the Fleet," to learn how to use each unit to its maximum effectiveness.



CHAPTER 4: USING THE FLEET

ORIENTATION



This chapter covers the basics of how to use a complex fleet of more than 70 spacecraft. From Fighters to Capital Ships, each has a unique purpose in its design and function. Most importantly, they are designed to work together.

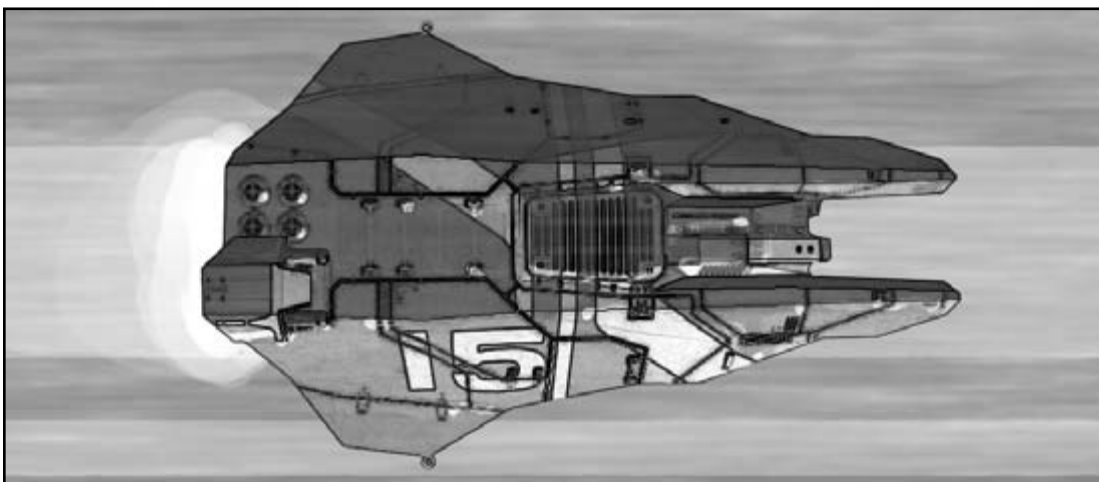
First, we discuss the unit relationship, which governs how the ships interact during combat. Secondly, we cover special abilities and how to use them effectively. We also include the overall effectiveness of fighting groups and how to combine them into more effective fighting forces called Strikegroups. And finally, we discuss how to use the Advanced Tactical Interface (ATI). These are all the basics you need to become a strong *Homeworld2* player.

Unit Attack Abilities

Each ship is designed to excel in at least one tactical role. Conversely, there are other roles that ships perform poorly—if at all. Become familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of your ships by reviewing the following diagrams. These diagrams indicate the general relationship between ship classes and ship chassis and whether they're complementary or dissimilar units.










With these diagrams, you can easily build a unit that counters any attacker—or as an attacker, one

that can destroy the enemy fleet. The diagrams are generalized across ship type and chassis, so there are a few exceptions, but they reflect the general rules of each category. We've highlighted the majority of the Hiigaran fleet here, but we've also included a few of the Vaygr ships that differ from the general categories of the Hiigaran. In short, assume that each Vaygr ship type works approximately the same as the corresponding Hiigaran unit, with only minor exceptions, which are also included.

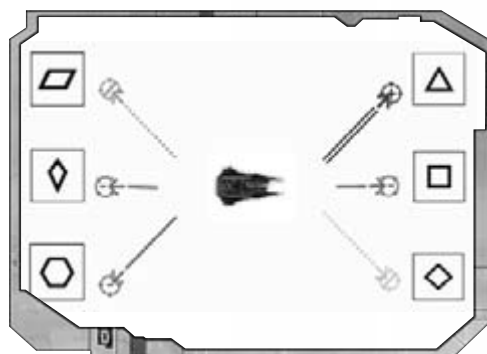


Ship Relationship Diagram Legend

Use this legend for Figures 4.2 through 4.14. It discusses each part of the diagram and what it represents. Each symbol below represents a certain type of ship class. Each chassis class has a relationship to every other chassis class in battle. The arrows indicate the strength and weaknesses of those relationships.

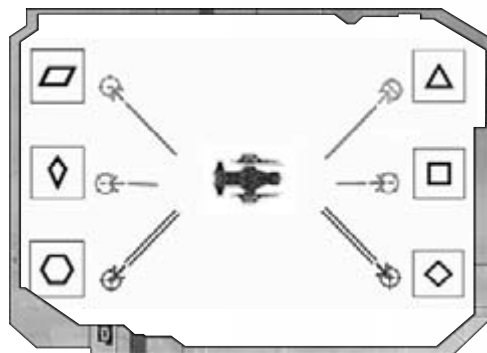
-  Represents the Fighters/Bombers class chassis.
-  Represents the Corvette class chassis.
-  Represents the Frigate class chassis.
-  Represents the Capital Class chassis. These are the largest ships in the fleet.
-  Represents the Utility class. This class includes Resource Collectors, Mobile Refineries, Probes, and other utility objects like the Proximity Sensor.
-  Represents the Platform class, which are generally used for stationary defense mechanisms.
-  **Attacks Effectively:** This line represents the best use of this ship class' abilities. Try to engage enemy units of this chassis type as indicated.
-  **Attacks Poorly:** This line represents an attack that is a less-than-optimal use of the ships' abilities. You may inflict some damage, but you won't inflict the maximum damage or make much of an impact over time.
-  **Attacks Ineffectively:** This line represents general suicide missions for this ship class. Don't attack the ships indicated as having this type of relationship.

INTERCEPTOR



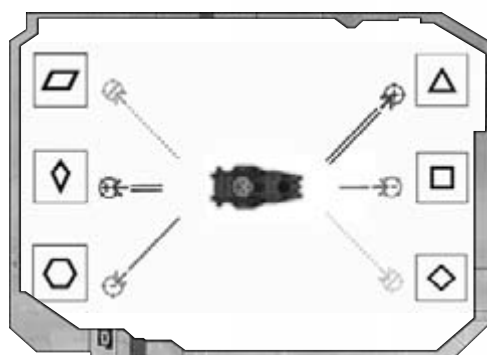
- Favorite Prey: Bomber
- Nemesis: Assault Frigate

BOMBER



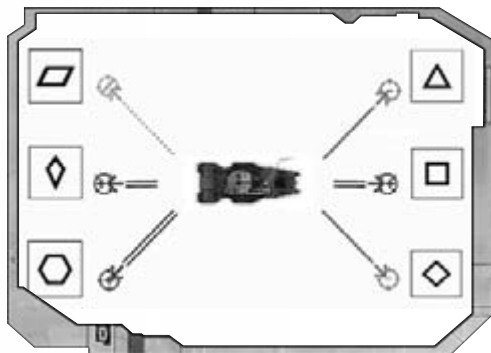
- Favorite Target: Capital Ship Subsystems
- Nemesis: Assault Frigate, Interceptor

GUNSHIP CORVETTE



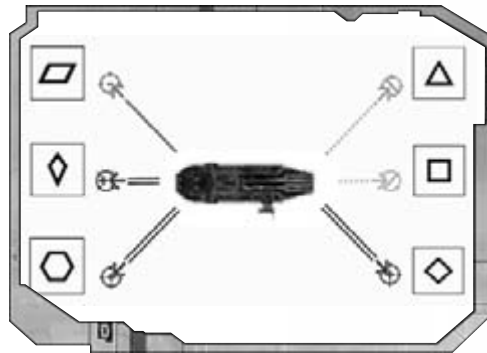
- Favorite Target: Bombers
- Nemesis: Torpedo Frigate, Pulsar Corvette, Lance Fighter

PULSAR CORVETTE



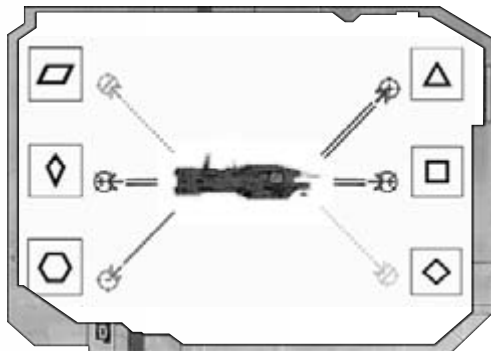
- Favorite Target: Gunship Corvette
- Nemesis: Torpedo Frigate, Pulsar Corvette, Lance Fighter

TORPEDO FRIGATE



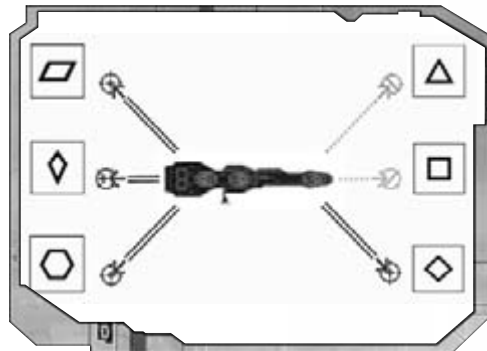
- Favorite Target: Corvettes
- Nemesis: Battlecruiser, Destroyer, Bombers

ASSAULT FRIGATE



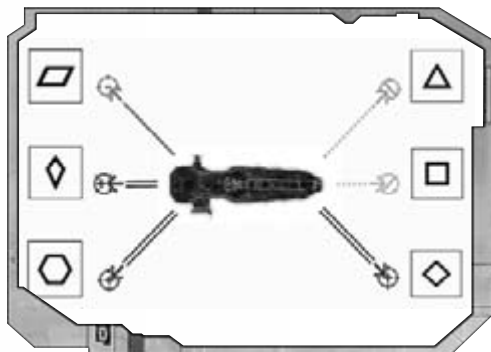
- Favorite Target: Fighters
- Nemesis: Battlecruiser, Destroyer, Bombers

DESTROYER



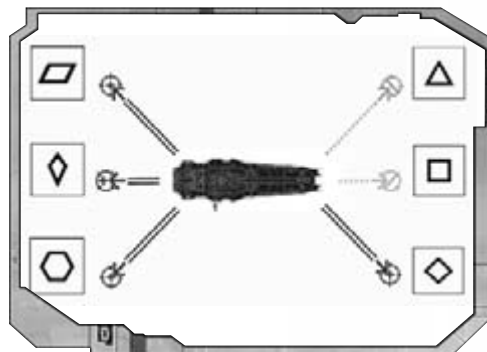
- Favorite Target: Frigates, Shipyards
- Nemesis: Battlecruiser

ION CANNON FRIGATE



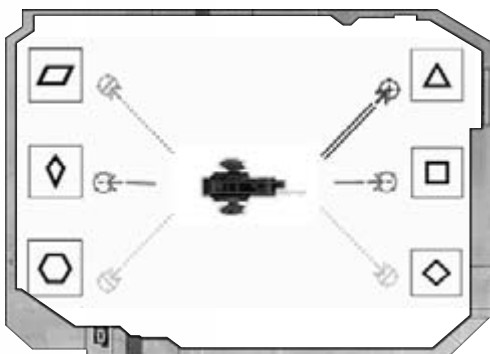
- Favorite Target: Torpedo Frigate
- Nemesis: Battlecruiser, Destroyer, Bombers

BATTLECRUISER



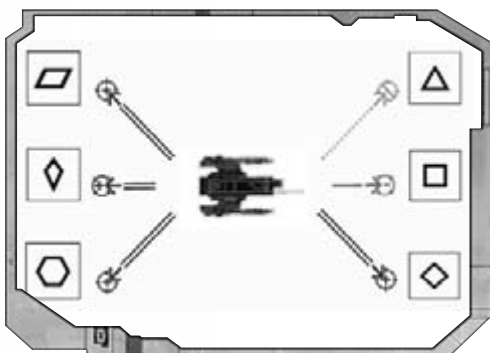
- Favorite Target: Frigates, Super Capital Ships
- Nemesis: Bombers

GUN PLATFORM



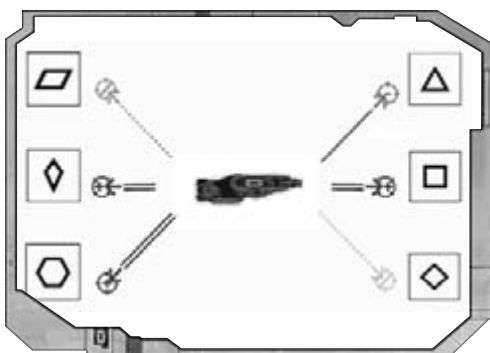
- Favorite Target: Fighters
- Nemesis: Heavy Missile Frigate

ION CANNON PLATFORM



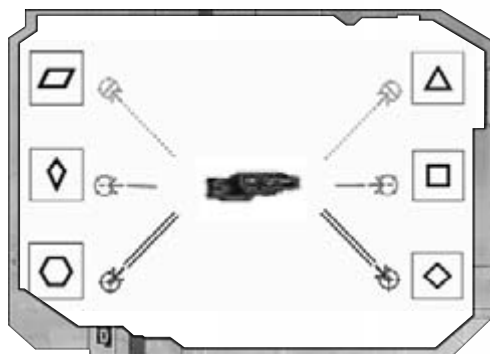
- Favorite Target: Frigates, Capital Ships
- Nemesis: Strikecraft

LANCE FIGHTER



- Favorite Target: Corvettes
- Nemesis: Interceptor, Assault Frigate

LASER CORVETTE



- Favorite Target: Frigates
- Nemesis: Pulsar Corvette

Unit Abilities

Unit abilities are the special abilities inherent to certain ships. For example, the Resource Collector can collect resources, but with an upgrade, it can also repair ships. To research the collector repair ability, hit **[R]** or press the Research menu on the in-game interface. Then, click on the Resource Collector repair upgrade.

RESOURCE COLLECTOR REPAIR

After you research the collector repair ability, you can fix damaged Capital Ships. To avoid micro-managing these repairs, assign a Resource Collector or two to fleet repair duty—select the Resource Collectors, press the repair command **[Y]**, and group select your main Battlefleet. The Resource Collectors tag along and automatically fix damages as they occur.

NOTE

Collectors can only repair Capital and Super Capital Ships. Strikecraft, Corvettes, and Resource Collectors must dock in order to be repaired. Collectors can't repair subsystems on Capital Ships; these are repaired automatically at the ship's regeneration rate.

BOARDING PARTY IN ACTION

Marine (Hiigaran) and Infiltration (Vaygr) Frigates replace the Capture Corvette of *Homeworld*. Like the Capture Corvette, they are highly vulnerable to enemy fire. Therefore, you should clear the skies of enemy Strikecraft before you send Marine and Infiltration Frigates into a target area. These ships are relatively delicate, and the computer opponent treats them as a high-priority target.

TIP

Assign multiple Marine Frigates to a single target in order to speed up the boarding process.

A captured ship instantly becomes part of your fleet and behaves like any other ship, except that you can't use alien Production Facilities (a Hiigaran fleet cannot produce Vaygr craft, no matter how many Vaygr Carriers they capture). Also, you can't exceed your population cap for a ship type by capturing additional ships.

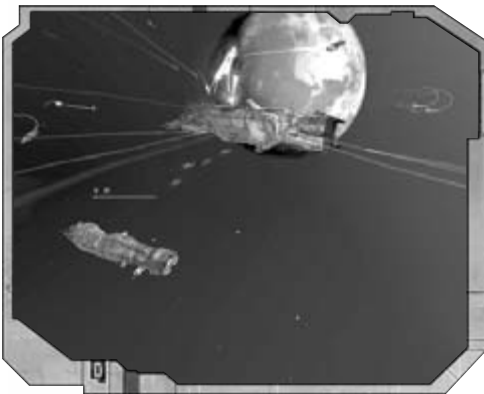


Fig. 4-1. The Infiltration Frigate on the lower left will never survive this boarding action.

CAUTION

If your Marine Frigates move in for the assault and just hang there doing nothing, either call them off or retire one of your existing ships.

DEFENSE FIELD

The Defense Field Frigate is a powerful, high-energy shield projector that sits on a Frigate chassis. While active, the Defense Field absorbs all damage from heavy beam and kinetic munitions, like those found on Capital Ships. Strikecraft can get inside the Defense Field, where it cannot stop their weapons. Press **[T]** to activate the Defense Field.

Defense Fields have a very limited range, so have the ships you wish to protect within its perimeter (visible as two perpendicular circles on the ATI).

Don't include these Frigates in a Strikegroup. They take up a front-and-center position, which is rarely what you want. Instead, assign the Defense Field Frigates to guard **[G]** the vessel you want protected.

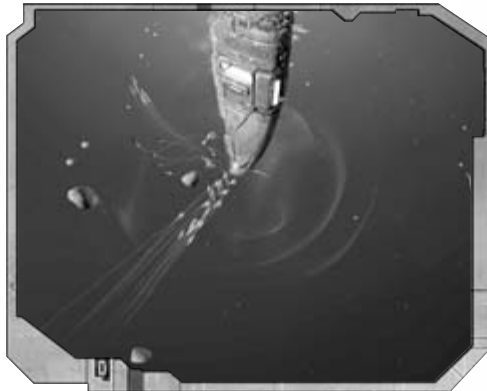


Fig. 4-2. Bombers can get inside a Defense Field, rendering it useless.

MINELAYERS



Mines are most potent against Capital and Super Capital Ships and are great for defending resource

zones—especially when deployed in concert with Weapons Platforms.

Minefields can be laid in either a two-dimensional grid or a three-dimensional cube. Hold **[ctrl]** to adjust width and **[shift]** to adjust height while moving the mouse. Press **[N]** to deploy mines.

Mines *do* have a limited lifespan. After about five minutes, the quantum instability that provides their destructive power goes critical. The mine then “winks out” of existence. Unless you assign new duties to a Minelayer, it continues to replace mines as they disappear.

CLOAKING

Cloaking is available for any ship that can build a subsystem. You need to acquire an Advanced Research Module first, though. For the ultimate in sneak attacks, set your fleet to passive mode and cloak before using a hyperspace jump to move in for a close attack on an opponent. Unless your opponent has a Proximity Sensor, your fleet is undetectable. While the cloak is still active, quickly scramble your Strikecraft. Once everything is fully deployed, fall on your enemy with all guns blazing. Press **[C]** to cloak or uncloak.

TIP

Cloaks are also great for disengaging from a losing battle. Just set your squadrons to passive mode and withdraw. That way, your ships won't fire and reveal themselves to the enemy.

Fleet Composition

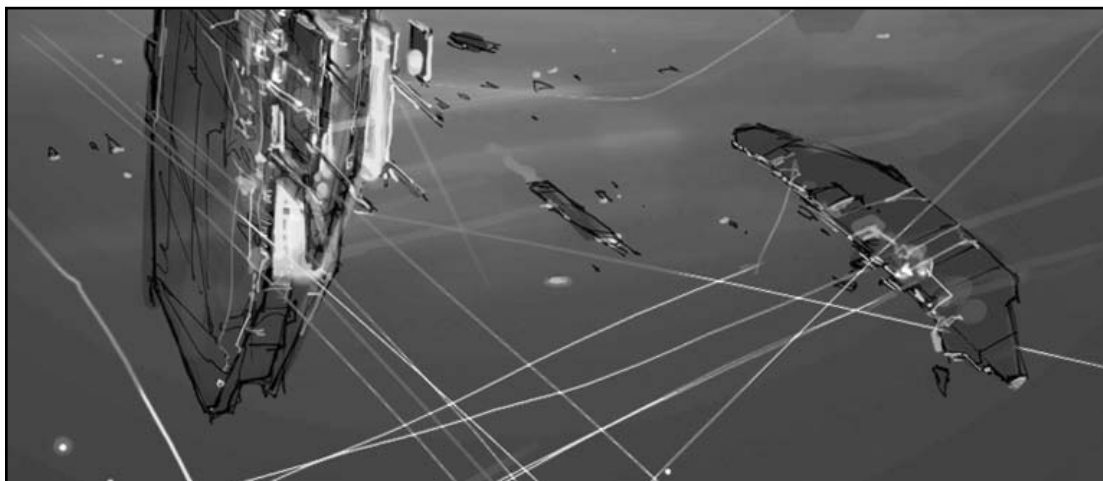
Despite what some pilots might claim, there's no such thing as a “perfect ship.” Ships are designed with certain roles in mind, and the very process of optimization introduces fundamental weaknesses. This is why Hiigaran Fleet Academy teaches, “Any commander can build ships. Great commanders build fleets.”

When designing a fleet, choose the Primary Mission Vessel first. For an attack on Capital Ships, this might mean Bombers (for a fast, deep strike) or Heavy Missile Frigates (for sustained engagement and holding ground).

Identify the main vulnerability of your Primary Mission Vessels (for Bombers, this is Interceptors or Assault Craft). Now identify the ship best equipped to deal with this vulnerability, and attach a support wing of these craft to your mission fleet.

Obviously, more complex tactical situations require you to create a more complex fleet in order to be balanced, and the variations are too large to be listed here.

A final consideration for any fleet is its complement of support vessels. You get a lot more “mileage” from your Strikecraft if they can dock at a nearby Capital Ship when damaged, and Frigates last longer if there's a group of Resource Collectors with a repair upgrade nearby to fix damage when it occurs.



Strikegroups

Strikegroups allow you to move your fleet in formation. The one drawback to a Strikegroup is that it only moves at the speed of its slowest ship. The benefit is that you avoid having your Strikecraft squadrons cut to pieces because they arrived at a battle before their escorts.

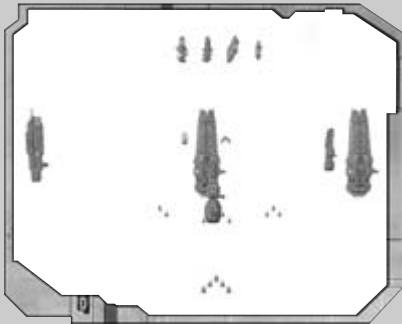
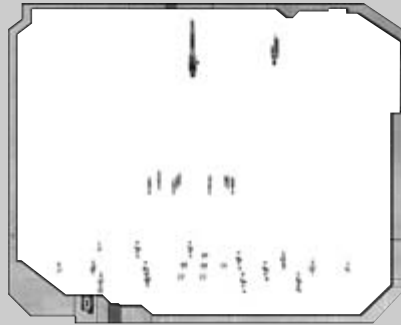
The three types of Strikegroups available are:

Complementary Ship Types

PRIMARY UNIT	WEAKNESS	COMPLEMENTARY UNIT
Bomber	Strikecraft	Interceptors, Flak Frigates
Interceptor	Corvettes	Torpedo Frigates
Frigates	Bombers, Super Capital Ships	Interceptors
Super Capital Ships	Bombers	Interceptors, Flak Frigates

CAPITAL PHALANX

Super Capital Ships arrange themselves in a firing line at the forward position. Frigates form a tight wall formation behind the Capital Ships, and Strikecraft bring up the rear. This formation allows heavy weaponry to engage at maximum range before the fray is entered. Press **[F5]** to activate.

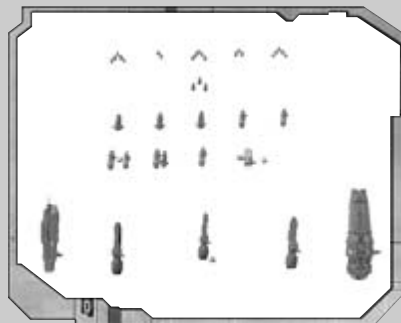


FRIGATE LINE

Frigates adopt a wall formation at the forward position. Capital Ships go into an "X" formation behind the Frigates, and Strikecraft go angels-high and angels-low with the Capital Ship formation. This formation puts the Interceptors in a good position to engage incoming Strikecraft, while Frigate firepower is concentrated in the center. Capital Ships can engage at range while enjoying some protection from incoming Strikecraft. Press **[F6]** to activate.

FIGHTER SCREEN

This is similar to the Frigate Line formation, except that Fighters take the point. Fighters fly in loose formation to minimize damage from area-of-effect weaponry. Use this formation to prevent enemy Strikecraft from breaking through to your Capital lines. Press **[F7]** to activate.



Once a battle is engaged, the individual members of a Strikegroup behave normally. To concentrate fire, either focus the *entire* Strikegroup or assign control groups to the various lines of ships within the Strikegroup.

TIP

Focused firing—directing your entire fleet to attack a single target—is the fastest way to bring down the largest enemy vessels. Use this tactic sparingly, as Interceptors will engage a Super Capital Ship if so directed, but they'll target more appropriately when left to engage on their own.

Using the Advanced Tactical Interface (ATI)

The ATI is designed with one purpose: to help you make the right decision, fast. Much of the information in the ATI is available elsewhere, but using the Heads-Up Display capabilities dramatically increases your understanding of the tactical situation.

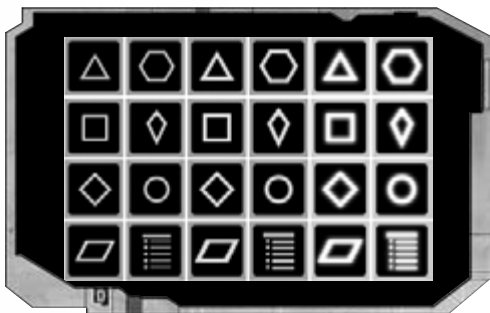
There is a lot of information available in the ATI. You can't display all of it at once, but you can tailor the display to your tactical requirements. Before you can do this, you must become familiar with what's available.

Press **tab** to cycle between the different icon displays in the ATI. This rotates through the three possible states.

- No Tactical Icons displayed
- Ship Tactical Icons displayed
- Ship Tactical and Sphere of Effect Icons displayed

SHIP ICONS

By now you probably recognize that each ship class has its own Tactical Icon in the game screen. They look like this:



The icons allow you to quickly identify both friendly and hostile formations and, from there, rapidly gauge the tactical situation. Sure, you can

zoom in to learn the same information, but this is much faster.

Situations to Watch For

- Harvester Icons in a line: these require orders.
- Enemy Frigates or Resource Collectors in close formation with Enemy Super Capital ships: these are often support vessels (such as a Defense Field Frigate or a repair detail) and are high-priority targets.
- Enemy Frigates in close quarters with your Super Capital Ships: most Frigates that engage a Super Capital Ship will do so from range. The exception is boarding vessels (Marine Frigate/Infiltration Frigate), which must close in for an attack.

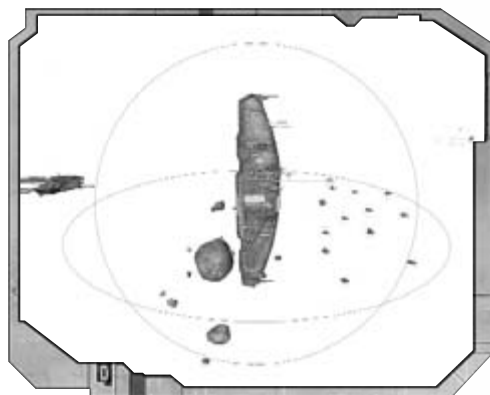


Fig. 4-3. By displaying ships as Tactical Icons, they can be identified at a distance. Note the distant Fighter and Resource Collector units.

SPHERE OF EFFECT ICONS

Nothing is more embarrassing than hyperspacing your fleet into combat, only to find that your Frigates have been left behind. Learn to use the Spheres of Effect so that this doesn't happen on your next assault.

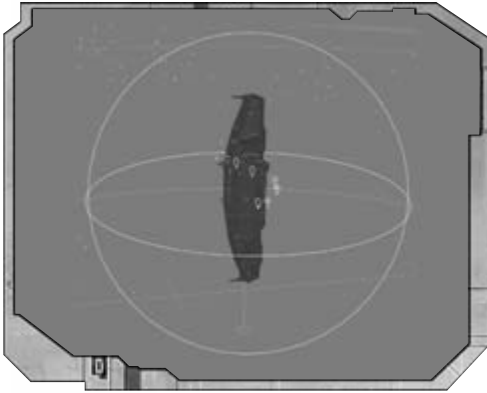


Fig. 4-4. Sphere of Effect for a Cloaking Module

Spheres of Effect are displayed as two perpendicular circles centered on a ship. Every ship inside the sphere is subject to its effects, while those outside are unaffected.

It can be difficult to get your ships to stay within a desired Sphere of Effect. There are a couple of ways to do this: either assign them to guard the ship at the sphere's center, or put them in passive mode so that they stay where you want them to.

HEALTH/SUBSYSTEM HEALTH

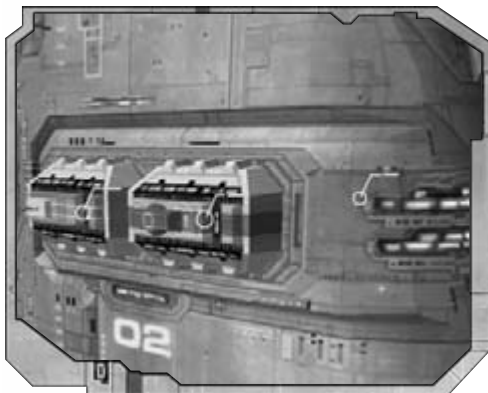


Fig. 4-5. Subsystem health

A ship's health bar is visible as a large, horizontal green bar once you select the ship. In order to see a Capital Ship's subsystems, you must zoom in closer, in addition to selecting the ship. The health bar for subsystems works and looks like a smaller version of the ship's health bar, with fewer hull points. You can target a hostile ship's subsystems just as you would any other target.

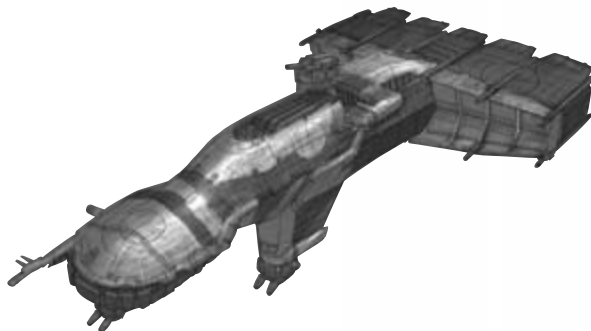
"Inherent" subsystems (those that are present on a standard-issue ship, such as engines) are automatically repaired at a slow but steady rate. Resource Collectors cannot repair subsystems.

TIP

Upgrade your ship's hull points *before* the battle begins. If your ship is down to 10 percent maximum hull strength, an upgrade will give you just 10 percent of the *new* maximum hull strength—you'll have to perform repairs to reap the full benefit of the upgrade, so don't count on that as a last-ditch solution.



Fig. 4-6. When you select a ship with subsystems, these are displayed on the lower right of the ATI.



Movement

After you learn how to use the ATI, navigating in 3D space becomes much easier than you might expect. There are a couple of things, however, that you should be aware of.

OBJECTS MAY BE FARTHER AWAY THAN THEY APPEAR

It's easiest to judge distance on a plane that's perpendicular to your point of view. As the angle of incidence decreases, distances become distorted—distances in the foreground are increased, while faraway objects appear closer together.

The ATI compensates for this distortion. When you select a ship for movement, the movement disk appears as a blue circle, which changes size in proportion to how far you've directed the ship to move. Based on the size of the circle, you can easily tell how far you're telling the ship to go. In addition, the distance is displayed in meters or kilometers.

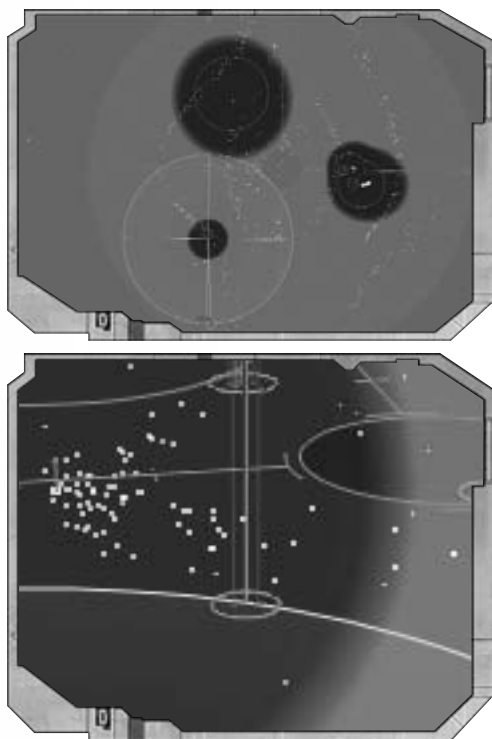


Fig. 4-7a & b. Here are two perspectives on the same movement disk [the shaded circle in the lower right of these images]. With a 3D perspective, distances are distorted.

Ships in *Homeworld2* always move on a two-dimensional plane unless you direct them to do otherwise. If you do need to move in the Z-axis (there is no "up" or "down" in space), the ATI provides some assistance in getting you where you're going.

The easiest way to move in the Z-axis is when your destination is a Super Capital Ship or a resource zone. These objects display positioning guides in the display when you are in move mode. Two guides are displayed: a vertical line between the object's current Z-plane and yours, and a circle on your current Z-plane, which shows the target's position on the X- and Y-axes.

To move a ship toward such an object, first bring up the movement disk as usual. Locate the vertical guideline extending from your target and follow it with your eyes until you see the positioning circle. Click and hold the left mouse button once you've targeted this circle. You can now move in the Z-axis—simply drag your mouse up and down until you've followed the guideline back to its source. Release and left-click again to start moving toward your target. At any time, you can click and drag with the right button to change your perspective. This can help you until you get a feel for navigating a true 3D world.

If an enemy formation is on a different Z-plane, you may find it easier to "shift planes" before you attack. To get on the same Z-plane as a target—without actually going to its location—select it like any other 3D target, but don't left click once you've released the mouse button. Your destination marker is now locked in the target's Z-plane, but you can freely move around on the X- and Y-axes. Select a quiet spot as a staging area, and attack the target on the same horizontal plane.

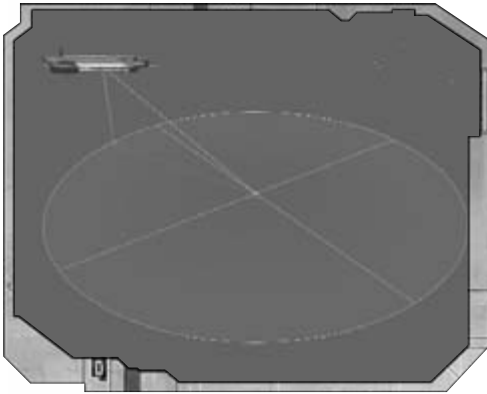


Fig. 4-8. The Shipyard provides positioning cues to guide you toward it.

If you don't have a target to guide you in, the ATI can still help you. Use the vertical distance cues and the distance gauge to chart your course.

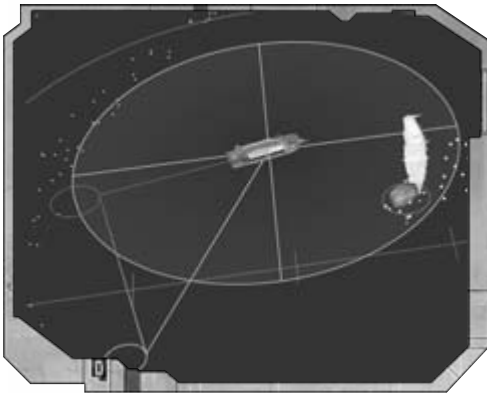


Fig. 4-9. Without targeting cues, rely on the vertical distance indicator to find your way.

WAYPOINTS

Waypoints (**W**) work in much the same way as regular movement, but you can select multiple destination points. Your ships follow a path that "connects the dots." In Mission 5, you can use this feature to keep your ships within the ion clouds without having to tweak their movement every few seconds. This feature also makes patrolling a lot easier to manage.

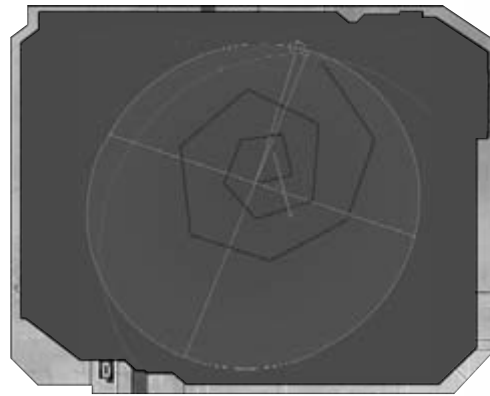


Fig. 4-10. Waypoints allow you to create complex paths for your fleet.

Ship Command Menu



Fig. 4-11. The ship command menu

This menu appears on the taskbar's left side. It's context sensitive, so buttons are only enabled if your current ship selection is capable of performing an action. All of the commands within this menu are available as keyboard shortcuts.

ATTACK-MOVE

If you order a fleet to attack a target, it will move toward it only as long as that target exists. If the target hyperspaces out of sensor range, or is obliterated by other ships, the fleet will come to a halt as it waits for new orders. Likewise, if the fleet encounters other hostile ships on the way to its target, it will ignore them.

To avoid situations like these, use Attack-Move *in any and all tactical situations*, by right-clicking directly on an enemy unit. Your fleet then moves toward the target ships as long as they're visible. If they disappear for any reason, the fleet will continue on to the last known position. And if

hostiles are encountered along the way, the fleet will engage them before continuing toward its destination. There are very few situations where this is not the ideal behavior for your fleet.

GUARD

When you tell a ship to guard another craft, it continues to follow that vessel, engaging hostiles that threaten its charge but never straying too far from it. This is ideal behavior for a Capital Ship's Strikecraft escort and allows you to keep the escort in aggressive mode while still maintaining fleet integrity.



Fig. 4-12. Carriers are a Bomber pilot's favorite meal. Assign a Guard detail of Interceptors to fend them off.

Guard mode is also handy for Defense Field Frigates. Assign them to guard your biggest Capital Ships, and you can rest assured that the guarded vessel is always within range of the Defense Field.

Another use for this feature is to assign Mobile Refineries to guard the Resource Collectors they're servicing. The Mobile Refineries follow the Resource Collectors, shortening their travel time, and the Mobile Refineries' sturdy complement of Hull Defense Guns help deal with any casual raids.

HYPERSPACE

The ability to instantly send a main Battlefleet into close-quarters combat on the other side of a map can be phenomenally powerful. A lightning raid by a single Battlecruiser can cause significant

disruption before you hyperspace back out again for repairs. But before you go, a few travel tips:

- **Bring an escort.** Any ship that can hyperspace is vulnerable to cheap Bombers, and it won't take them long to knock out your Hyperspace Module. Remember: it's only a lightning raid if you come back.
- **If you're not going to stay there, make sure you have enough juice to get back.** Hyperspace Modules take time to recharge—time that's best spent in friendly territory.
- **Beware the Gravity Well.** Even if you can hyperspace in for a battle, you can't be sure you can leave—not if your opponent can scramble in a Gravity-Well-bearing, hyperspace-inhibiting Capital Ship. Be certain that you can take these out if they're a threat [Bombers are deadly against subsystems].

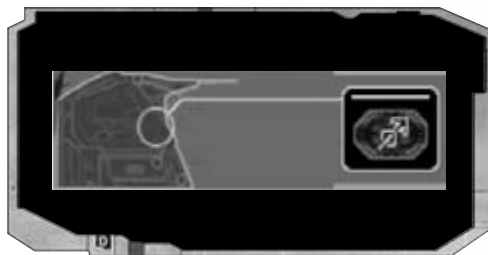


Fig. 4-13. A Gravity Well subsystem helps you avoid unexpected visitors.

A Hyperspace Module has a Sphere of Effect. Any Frigates within this sphere make the jump as well. To be certain that your Frigates are within this range, order them to guard the ship making the jump.

RETIRE

Retiring a ship gives you about 85 percent of a ship's hull cost back in RUs. It's not the most glorious way for a ship to go down, but it certainly is the most economical. Retire a ship by pressing **ctrl** + **shift** + **X** simultaneously.

In the single-player campaign, you should retire ships whenever they're not needed for a mission or two. The CPU's Reactive Fleet determines its

strength based on your fleet cost in RUs (it “discounts” your RU balance by 50 percent since it takes you time to convert this into fighting hulls).

In multiplayer, you rarely want to retire your Fighters—not when you can kamikaze them into Frigates or other Capital Ships.

The only time you’d want to retire ships in multiplayer or player vs. CPU is if you’re in an absolute bind. A couple of Carriers could be

converted into quite a few Resource Collectors if you’re desperately short of RUs. Attempting to “rush” by retiring your initial Carrier is not a viable strategy in multiplayer, as your build abilities become too constrained (discussed further in Chapter 11: “Multiplayer Strategies.”)

To familiarize yourself with the remaining commands in this menu, review the *Homeworld2* manual.

Special Commands Menu

Pressing **[S]** activates the special commands menu. Depending on the ship you’ve selected, you see some of the following commands available to you.

Scuttling

Scuttling (**[ctrl] [shift] [X]**) is accessed from the Special Commands Menu **[S]**. This accomplishes the same thing as retiring a ship, but the effect is instant: the ship self-destructs.

The benefit to retiring a ship is that you receive a large portion of its hull cost in RUs. The drawback is, the ship must travel back to a Capital Ship with a Build Facility in order to be retired.

Scuttle a ship only when it is about to be captured by a hostile Marine or Infiltrator Frigate and scuttling is the only way to prevent your enemy from using this ship against you.

Enhanced Scout Sensors (Sensor Ping)

At a cost of 1,000 RUs, a ping (press **[X]** to activate) momentarily reveals all enemy ships within a radius of over 80km. You must be fast in order to identify the enemy formations (“reading” icons certainly helps), but you can also follow up with a much cheaper probe once you’ve estimated position. This is a great feature for hunting down an opponent’s elusive last Carrier when that’s the only thing standing between you and grid dominance.

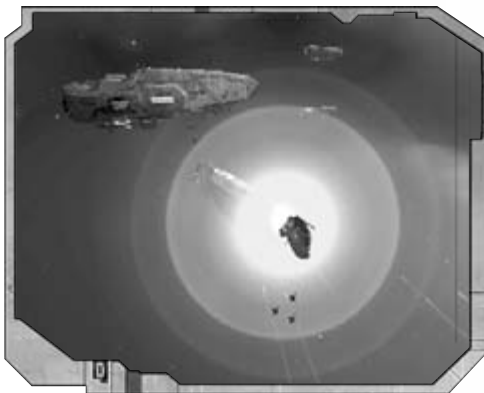
The Hiigaran Scout is the only ship that goes “ping.” This ability requires the enhance sensor Scout research.

ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE (EMP)

Both Hiigaran and Vaygr Scouts can generate an EMP. Press **[E]** to enable the EMP burst. This can disable an enemy vessel for a short period of time (35 seconds) without causing any damage. In order to use this ability, select an enemy craft to disable. The Scout closes to within range before releasing the pulse. Unfortunately, the range isn’t very great, so the Scout can often be destroyed by counterfire before getting a chance to engage.

When an EMP burst is fired at a ship, the ship’s EMP shield rating is displayed. This shield must be taken down to zero before the ship is disabled.

EMP bursts are most effective against Strikecraft. It takes a number of EMP bursts to bring down a Frigate’s shields.



RALLY POINT

Any ship with building capabilities can set a rally point for the vessels it manufactures. Use this feature to establish a staging area for your fleet. To set the rally point, select a production-capable ship and press **[P]**.



Fig. 4-14. Use "Rally to Object" to automatically deploy Resource Collectors to a resource zone.

RALLY OBJECT

Besides rallying to a point on the map, ships can be made to rally to a specific ship or other object. This can be used to direct newly constructed ships to join your Strikergroup's flagship. To set the rally object, select a production-capable ship and press **[ctrl]+[P]** simultaneously.

Build Menu

The build menu is where you handle all fleet and Module construction. You can select a specific build facility by using the dropdown at the top of the menu, or "flip" through them by repeatedly hitting the Build menu key **[B]**.

The "Show all Build Facilities" option gives you an at-a-glance display of everything you can build with the currently selected ship, broken down by hull class. In addition, this also displays the number of ships of a specific hull type you currently have, along with the population cap (more on these later).

If you choose, you can also display this menu on a per-hull-class basis.



Fig. 4-15. The Build menu

Beneath the build options, you see your build queue for the current facility. Note that Module construction can take place concurrently with ship production.

If you have more than one ship or Module type in the build queue, you can move items up and down in the queue by using the arrows on the right. This allows you to prioritize build order. No penalty is applied for adjusting the build queue, so use this to your advantage by building units that have a direct inverse relationship to your opponent's fleet in combat.

TIP

Often times, several ships enter the build queues on several ships, and you may run out of resources to continue building. In this case, prioritize your building. Cancel the ships that you can live without for a while, and once they're cancelled, the available RUs go to the ships that you need most.

FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

There are four different types of Production Facilities, one for each hull class. In order to manufacture ships in a particular hull class, a production ship (Carrier, Shipyard, Flagship, Mothership) must first build the appropriate Production Facility.

Production Facilities are constructed on specially reinforced deck positions known as "hardpoints." Each production ship has a limited number of hardpoints. Once a ship has filled its complement of hardpoints, it cannot build any additional Production Facilities.

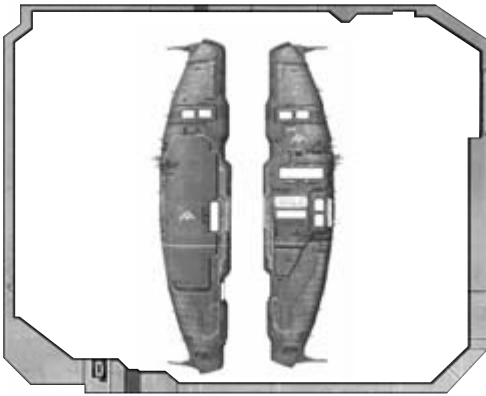


Fig. 4-16. Mothership hardpoints are displayed in white.

Production Hardpoints

PRODUCTION SHIP	HARDPOINTS
Vaygr Flagship	4
Hiigaran Mothership	4
Vaygr Carrier	1
Hiigaran Carrier	3
Shipyard	4

MODULES

Besides building ships, Super Capital Ships can build Modules. Modules provide enhanced capabilities and new research options, as well as the ability to build Advanced Research Modules.

Modules are built on specific hardpoints. As with Production Facilities, there are a limited number of these hardpoints on each ship.

Module Hardpoints

SHIP	HARDPOINTS
Vaygr Flagship	4
Hiigaran Mothership	4
Vaygr Carrier	1
Hiigaran Carrier	2
Shipyard	4
Hiigaran Battlecruiser	2

Hiigaran Modules

MODULE	VAYGR COST	HIIGARAN COST	BENEFITS	PREREQUISITES
Research	500	1,500	Opens up many other research and Module construction options.	None
Advanced Research	N/A	2,250	Unlocks Hiigaran advanced research and construction options, including the Battlecruiser (Vaygr don't require this).	None
Hyperspace	1,000	1,000	Permits the ship to perform hyperspace jumps (Sphere of Effect).	Research Module
Gravity Well Generator	1,500	1,500	Inhibits hostile hyperspace jumps.	Research Module
Cloak Generator	750	1,000	Makes ship invisible while activated.	Research Module
Fire Control Tower	1,500	1,500	Improves nearby ships' ability to hit targets (Sphere of Effect).	None
Platform Control	625	500	Permits construction and control of Weapons Platforms.	None

POPULATION CAPS

Besides the hull-class restrictions, several vessel types have population caps. There is no way around this other than to retire ships that you don't need.

Even if you've reached your population cap for a particular ship, you can still put it in the build queue. As soon as your population of that ship type drops, production begins. Use this feature to keep your fleet "maxed out."



Fighter Squadrons	0/14
Corvette Squadrons	0/12
Frigates	0/21
Capture Frigates	0/4
Defense Field Frigates	0/2
Capital Ships	1/13
Destroyers	0/5
Carriers	1/4
Battlecruisers	0/3
Shipyards	0/1
Platforms	0/20
Utility Ships	0/50
Resource Collectors	0/20
Mobile Refineries	0/4
Probe	0/10
Sensor Distortion Probe	0/10
Proximity Sensor	0/10

Fig. 4-17. Track your population with this menu

Research Menu

You must often choose between building more ships and upgrading your existing ones. Here are a couple of things to consider: Shipbuilding berths are expensive. First you must build a Carrier or Shipyard, then you must pay for a subsystem, and finally, you pay for the hulls themselves. Research, on the other hand, doesn't take up any berths and can be performed simultaneously with shipbuilding. After you've upgraded a vessel, the bonuses are instantly applied to your existing fleet.

All research is dependent on Modules. Before you can perform basic research, you must build a Research Module.

TIP

Get into the habit of checking for available research whenever you queue up a large number of a single ship type.

Most ship-improvement research is specific to a vessel type. Researching Destroyer hulls does nothing for Carriers. Focus your research on ships you build frequently to maximize the advantage you gain.

Vessel improvement research is broken down into three areas: hull upgrades, weapons upgrades, and speed upgrades.

HULL UPGRADES

Hull upgrades for Super Capital Ships are most effective if you're outnumbered, if you've stretched your building/fleet capacity to its limit, or if you've built out your fleet to capacity. Frigates, on the other hand, are always good candidates for hull upgrades. You can build many more squadrons of these, maximizing your research costs over a large number of hulls. Frigates are also less survivable to begin with, so you can quickly affect their attrition rate.

With a couple of hull upgrades, Hugaran Destroyers gain a 60-percent bonus to their hull strength, providing two upgraded Destroyers with more hull points than three "standard issue" ones. Unfortunately, they still have the firepower of Destroyers, and the research is more expensive than building three Destroyers to begin with. You need to build three *upgraded* Destroyers before the research really starts to pay for itself. Fortunately, after that it's all gravy.

WEAPONS UPGRADES

Most ships lack weapons upgrades, so you've got no excuse for not becoming *very* familiar with the options that exist.

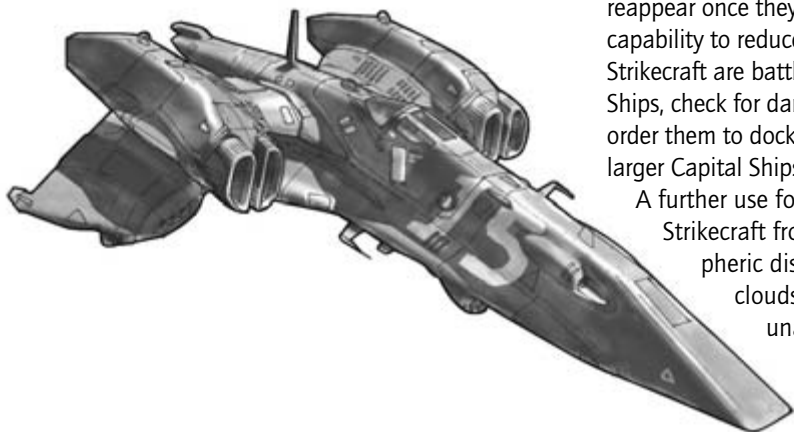
SPEED UPGRADES

Although hyperspace is the fastest way to bring a fleet into battle, enemies can inhibit your ability to use this by building Gravity Well Generators (see the following Module list). In this situation, the only other choice you have is to improve the hull speed of your ships.

The major tactical benefit to increasing ships' speed is their ability to evade slower hostile ships, as well as to close in on an evasive hostile force. Improving a ship's speed doesn't affect an enemy's ability to hit it (fast Strikecraft *are* slightly more difficult to hit with big weaponry, but the difference is marginal).



Fig. 4-18. The Research menu



Launch Menu

Strikecraft and Corvettes can't enter hyperspace on their own. The Vaygr can build Hyperspace Gates to transport these ships quickly, but usually you must dock them within a hyperspace-capable Capital Ship to make the jump.

To prevent them from immediately launching again, select "Stay Docked" in the Capital Ships' Launch menu. Once docked, you can launch individual squadrons by selecting them from the Launch menu.

You can also use docking to mislead an opponent about your fleet composition. Turn on the "Stay Docked" option before you start building Strikecraft. With this feature on, the Strikecraft stay docked once built. To an opponent's sensors, your fleet begins to look like a tasty target for an Anti-Capital force. When the enemy attacks with a line of Anti-Capital Ships, first scramble your Fighters, then scramble your opponent's plans.

Strikecraft are automatically repaired while docked. If the auto-launch mode is selected, they reappear once they've been fully repaired. Use this capability to reduce the attrition rate. When your Strikecraft are battling near your Super Capital Ships, check for damaged squadrons frequently, and order them to dock for repairs. Damaged Frigates or larger Capital Ships do not decrease in firepower.

A further use for docking is to prevent your Strikecraft from being damaged by atmospheric disturbances. Nebulas and ion clouds can wreak havoc on small, unarmored hulls, but the thick armor plating of the docking facilities provides complete protection.



Fig. 4-19.
The Launch menu

Queue Menu

This feature is designed to give you at-a-glance information about your build/research progress across your entire fleet. You can also stop or pause construction at any facility. There is no penalty for stopping or pausing construction. If construction is stopped, the full amount of RUs spent is returned to your RU balance with no hidden fees. If paused, construction can start again at any time. Although a good fleet commander doesn't *want* to go around changing build orders all the time, the lack of penalties means that you can be flexible in adapting to the current situation.

Tactics Menu

Changing the "rules of engagement" for your ships gives you control over your fleet's behavior. There are three defined tactical modes.

- **Aggressive:** Ships target any bogey within engagement range and attempt pursuit if necessary.
- **Defensive:** Ships engage nearby hostiles but don't attempt pursuit and instead return to their assigned station.
- **Passive:** Ships do not engage or pursue hostiles, even if fired upon.

Aggressive is the most commonly used tactical mode. It may, however, be inappropriate and can be exploited to some extent. Watch that your Strikecraft aren't baited into a trap or drawn away from the fleet.



Fig. 4-20. The Tactics menu

Defensive mode is more appropriate for ships that should stay in formation. This is the default behavior for new squadrons. To some extent, putting ships on guard duty accomplishes the same thing, but guard mode is cancelled by any move or attack orders while defensive mode is not.

Passive behavior is useful in limited, specific circumstances. If your fleet is cloaked, firing will just reveal its presence. This is also useful in places such as ion clouds or nebulas, where you want to completely prevent your ship from moving.

Events Display

When events come at a fast and furious pace, it can sometimes be difficult to keep up. The Events Display allows you to revisit recent happenings among your fleet. This tells you such information as when new research or build options become available. Each event has a "jump to" button beside it. If the event is associated with a particular location, you can click here to quickly respond to it. This is particularly useful when you hear "Resource Collector Lost." You can immediately jump to the Resource Collector's location by selecting "click to focus icon" on the event text, or press **insert** on the key pad.

Sensors Manager

The Sensors Manager allows you to zoom out and take a larger view of the current tactical situation. The areas covered by your sensors and probes are visible as blue spheres, while ships show up as Tactical Icons (at maximum zoom, ships appear simply as dots).

Along with using the various menus, you can fight an entire battle from the Sensors Manager view. Just about the only thing you *can't* do is target a ship's subsystems. This view is ideal for evaluating the overall status of your fleet in battle.

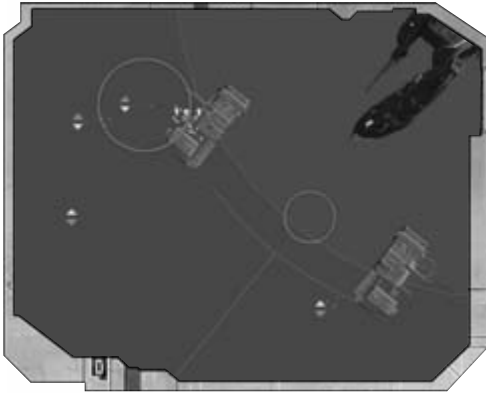


Fig. 4-21. Sensors Manager view of the battle

NOTE

One of the improvements that *Homeworld2*

offers is the Battle Momentum Indicator. This indicator provides visual feedback for how your fleet is doing against that of the enemy. A green indicator pointing up means that you're winning, while a red indicator pointing down means that you're losing.

Conclusion

Now that we've discussed the basic components of how to play the game, examined the fleets' special abilities, explored the menus, and studied the ATI, let's continue to Chapter 5, "Resources and Technologies." We discuss the details behind the individual technologies, how much they cost, if they're worth it, and when to research them. You'll learn about some common strategies and how building subsystems can make a big difference in long and short games.



CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPING THE FLEET—RESOURCE AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Homeworld2 uses a unified resource model. There is only one resource you ever have to worry about. This resource is found only on mineral-rich asteroids, and the *only* way to accumulate it is to harvest it with Resource Collectors. Everything you do to develop your fleet, whether researching new tech or building hulls, consumes this resource. Needless to say, without effective resourcing operations, your fleet won't get very far.

Resource zones represent the only thing equivalent to "high ground" in the vast emptiness of space. Because of this, you find yourself repeatedly fighting for control of these areas. This is a battle you cannot lose.

We'll now look at how you can maximize the efficiency of your resource operations, then explore some techniques for impeding an enemy's resource operations, as well as how to invest those resources once you've secured them. The technology tree is fairly involved and complex, but the critical thing to know is which technology advancements make the biggest difference. We'll cover that too.

RESOURCING OPERATIONS

A typical resource operation consists of several Resource Collectors and at least one support ship with a Resource Drop-Off point. Position the support ship as close to the resource zone as possible to decrease the Resource Collectors' travel time. A defensive fleet is also a good idea—raiding resourcing operations is a popular tactic.

NOTE

A Resource Collector can harvest its load of 200 RUs in about 23 seconds.

Resource Drop Offs

Once they've harvested a load of resources, Resource Collectors drop off their loads at Resource Drop-Off points. This is where the resources are processed and distributed to operations anywhere in the fleet. Drop-Off points are inherent subsystems found on Motherships/Flagships, Carriers, Mobile Refineries, and Shipyards. Each of these can support five Resource Collectors with full efficiency, with the exception of the Mothership/Flagship, which can support up to 10.

Additional Resource Collectors can be supported, but they will spend increasing amounts of time sitting around waiting to deposit their RU loads.

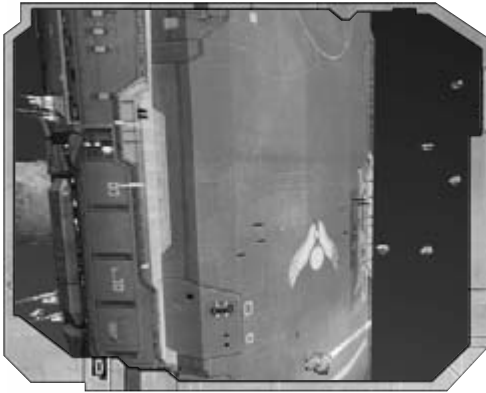


Fig. 5-1. You're all loaded up and no place to go—too many Resource Collectors, not enough Drop-Off points.

Mobile Refineries vs. Capital Ships as Resource Support Vessels

You must decide whether to use Mobile Refineries or Capital Ships to service your Resource Collectors. Although Mobile Refineries have Drop-Off points, their only other feature is a stout array of Hull Defense Guns. Mobile Refineries do *nothing* to increase the offensive potential of your fleet.

Instead of spending your resources building Mobile Refineries, consider using Carriers as your support vessels for resourcing ops. For Vaygr, this choice is even more compelling; Vaygr Carriers cost only 200 RU more than a Mobile Refinery.

Using Carriers also provides you with additional Production Facilities at strategic locations. In addition, the Carriers sport the same Hull Defense Gun complement as Refineries, with heavier armor and more hull points. The only drawback is that Carriers are slower (max. velocity: 75) than Mobile Refineries (max. velocity: 225), so it can take them much longer to reach distant resource zones.

TIP

Each asteroid can support a limited number of Resource Collectors at any given moment. This number is based on the asteroid's size.

- **Small asteroids: One Collector**
- **Medium asteroids: Two Collectors**
- **Large asteroids: Three Collectors**

Assigning more Resource Collectors to an area than it can support results in decreased efficiency. Try to develop new resource zones instead.



Fig. 5-2. Collectors enjoying a break—get them back to work.

DEVELOPING REMOTE RESOURCE ZONES

You're often in the position of having enough nearby resources to get development going, along with a pocket or two in places where battle is imminent. And the only other available resource zones are far away. Remember your hyperspace capabilities.

With a hyperspace-capable Carrier, those distant resource zones can be yours in the blink of an eye. Once you're on station, the Carrier can start building Resource Collectors—this doesn't require any technology or special Production Facilities. Then build a small picket fleet. This should be strong enough to fend off an opponent's harvesting raids, but don't worry about fighting off

a determined attack. Bombers are a popular choice for attacking resource operations, so consider arming yourself with Anti-Fighter weaponry. Anti-Fighter Frigates are great here, and they don't take up any docking bays if you have to suddenly hyperspace out of there. Just be sure to assign them to guard your Carrier so they're within the "Sphere of Effect" when you make the jump. In any case, make sure that all the ships in your remote fleet can hyperspace away at once if a massive assault is launched against them.

If your opponent does launch a serious attack, just dock all your Resource Collectors and jump out of there. You can consider coming back in force later if it's tactically worthwhile.

A great side benefit of this approach is that, when you're preparing for a large battle, you can recall your Carrier (along with its picket fleet) to join the main fleet for the duration of the conflict. Sure, the Resource Collectors will sit idle for a few minutes, but with your diligent harvesting techniques, you're far enough ahead not to worry.

Resource Denial

If your enemy can't harvest, then he can't build. And if he can't build, then he certainly can't put up much of a fight. Cutting off an enemy's logistics operations is a viable path to victory. By putting your opponent on the defensive, you also shift the battle's momentum in your favor. This can be an important psychological factor in multi-player games.

Start with the attitude that all the resources on the map are yours, and your opponent is stealing them from you. With that in mind, you're ready to perform effective resource denial.

With only one type of resource on the map, and the locations of this resource clearly visible, you always have a pretty good idea where your opponent's harvesting operations are.

Remote resources ops are less likely to be heavily defended. Send probes to distant resource pockets that your opponent may be working. Don't put the probes directly on top of the resource zone—probes have a wide sphere of coverage. By placing the probe farther away, so that the resource zone is just inside its area of coverage, your opponent is less likely to detect it.

RESOURCE OPERATIONS: RAID TECHNIQUES

When you do identify a good target for resource denial, send in the fleet. Bombers are effective at taking out the Resource Collectors, and, almost as importantly, they quickly get on station. If there are other defenses present, find the fastest ships you have that can quickly degrade them. Don't concentrate on the defenses if you don't have to, though. Your objective is to put an end to the resourcing operation. If your opponent is left with a few Frigates sitting in the middle of nowhere, so much the better.

Mobile Refineries and Carriers have strong hull defenses, so you may be tempted to take these out first. Don't. Once their local Drop-Off point is gone, Resource Collectors start streaming back to the Mothership to drop off their loads. You'll be stuck chasing them across space (and probably into the path of incoming defenders). Take out the Resource Collectors first and then deal with the Mobile Refineries. The one exception to this is Carriers—if you see one with a Hyperspace Module, make this your highest-priority target. Once it's destroyed, you have another 30 seconds or so of free rein before it comes back online. Don't let that fleet get away.



Fig. 5-3. Raid on a resourcing op

Another resource denial tactic is the "fire-and-forget" raid. Build up half a dozen of both Gun and Ion Cannon/Missile Platforms, and deploy them at the hostile resource operation. They arrive on point very quickly and pack enough firepower

Ch. 5: Resource and Technology Management

to cause significant disruption to a thinly defended operation. Because of their static placement, however, platforms are extremely vulnerable once your opponent has a chance to respond. If at all possible, consider following with a permanent force—your own resource operation, supported by escorts of Fighters and Bombers.

Resource Management

One implication of *Homeworld 2*'s uniform resource model is that every RU you spend on building Modules, facilities, or research is one less RU available for building up your fleet. Since building a fleet is the only way to win a battle, your goal should be to minimize other expenditures wherever possible. All the technology in the world won't save you if your fleet is weak and your Production Facilities are sitting idle for lack of resources.

MINIMIZING TECHNOLOGY COSTS

No set of guidelines is rich enough to encompass every tactical situation. Once you've refined your own techniques, you'll know exactly which technologies to develop and which ones to ignore. Until you've reached that level of expertise, be careful that you're getting the maximum value from your tech investments.

Ship upgrades are never cost effective with just one upgraded ship or squadron. You need several squadrons before the tech cost starts paying for itself. Another thing to remember: upgrades

instantly affect all ships in the upgraded class, wherever they are on the map. This allows you to "backload" your tech developments—wait until you've built the ships before you start upgrading them. If the battle shifts in such a way that makes these ships a less critical part of your fleet, you can then focus your resources elsewhere.

Technology

Vaygr and Hiigaran technology trees are almost complete opposites of each other. The Vaygr Research and Advanced Research Modules are cheap compared to their Hiigaran counterparts but don't unlock nearly as many ships. Instead, the Vaygr must expend small additional sums on developing individual ship types. This "hard-wired" approach allows Vaygr fleet commanders to expend fewer resources on technology, as long as they restrict the types of ships they intend to build.

With Hiigaran technology, on the other hand, high costs open many doors. Although a Hiigaran Research Module costs three times as much as the Vaygr one, it opens up ships in both the Corvette and Frigate classes. This gives the Hiigaran commander a great deal more flexibility. He can easily send a probe to identify what ships the Vaygr are building, then start churning out their counterunits, leaving his opponent no choice but to spend further sums on research just to keep up.

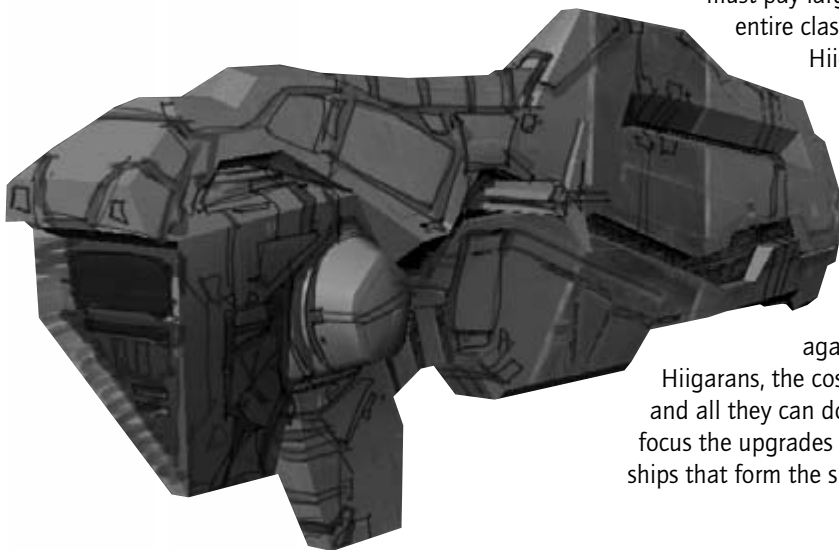
When it comes to ship upgrades, however, the situation flips around. Here, it is the Vaygr who must pay large sums to upgrade an entire class of ships, while the

Hiigaran can upgrade in a more finely grained manner, paying lower costs to do so.

If a Vaygr commander can succeed in fielding fewer types of ships, he's "winning" his battle

against technology costs. For

Hiigarans, the costs are set at a higher bar, and all they can do to minimize costs is to focus the upgrades on just the few, critical ships that form the spine of the fleet.





TIER 1 TECH

**Producible
Cap Ship**

Research
Module

Resource
Collector

Mobile
Refinery

Scout

Probe

Fighters

Fighter
Facility

Interceptor

Bomber

Turrets

Platform
Control
Module

Gun
Platform

**Capital
Ships**

CapShip
Bays

Carrier

**Research
and Modules**

Hyperspace
Sensors

Advanced
Sensors

Cloak
Sensor

Tier One (0-7 minutes)

TIER 2 TECH

Proximity
Sensor

Corvettes

Improved
Bombs

Corvette
Facility

Frigates

Improved
Torpedoes

Frigate
Facility

Platform
Ion Weapons

Destroyer

Imp Hyperspace
Drive 1

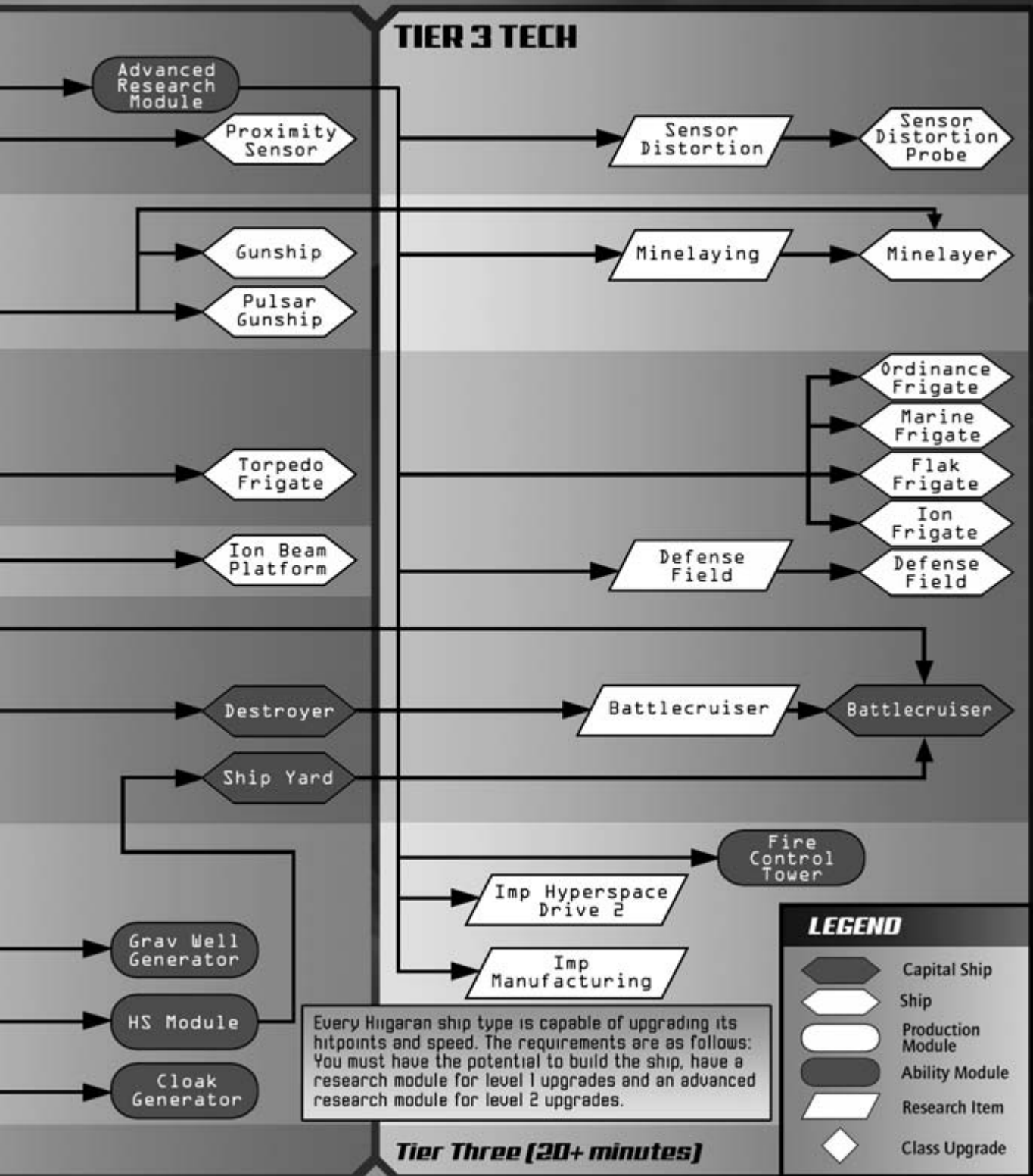
Enhanced
Sensors

EMP

Repair

Tier Two (7-20 minutes)

Ch. 5: Resource and Technology Management





HIIGARAN TECHNOLOGY AND MODULES

See Hiigaran Tech Tree, pages 60-61.

* *Legend*

C Carrier

SH Shipyard

MS Mothership

B Battlecruiser

Production Modules

MODULE NAME	SHIP CLASS*	REQUIRED RESEARCH	REQUIRED SUBSYSTEM/MODULES	COST
Fighter Facility	C,MS,SH	None	None	500
Corvette Production	C,MS,SH	None	Research	800
Frigate Production	C,MS,SH	None	Research	1,000
Capital Ship Prod.	MS, SH	None	None	1,800

Ability Modules

MODULE NAME	SHIP CLASS*	REQUIRED RESEARCH	REQUIRED SUBSYSTEM/MODULES	COST
Platform Control	C,MS,SH	None	None	500
Research	C,MS,SH	None	None	1,500
Advanced Research	C,MS,SH	None	Research	2,250
Hyperspace	C,MS,SH,B	None	Research	1,000
Gravity Well	C,MS,SH,B	None	Research	1,500
Cloak Generator	C,MS,SH,B	None	Research	750
Fire Control	C,MS,SH,B	None	Advanced Research	1,500

Sensor Modules

MODULE NAME	SHIP CLASS	REQUIRED RESEARCH	REQUIRED SUBSYSTEM/MODULES	COST
Hyperspace Sensors	C,MS,SH	None	None	250
Improved Sensors	C,MS,SH	None	None	250
Anti-Cloaking Sensors	C,MS,SH	None	None	250



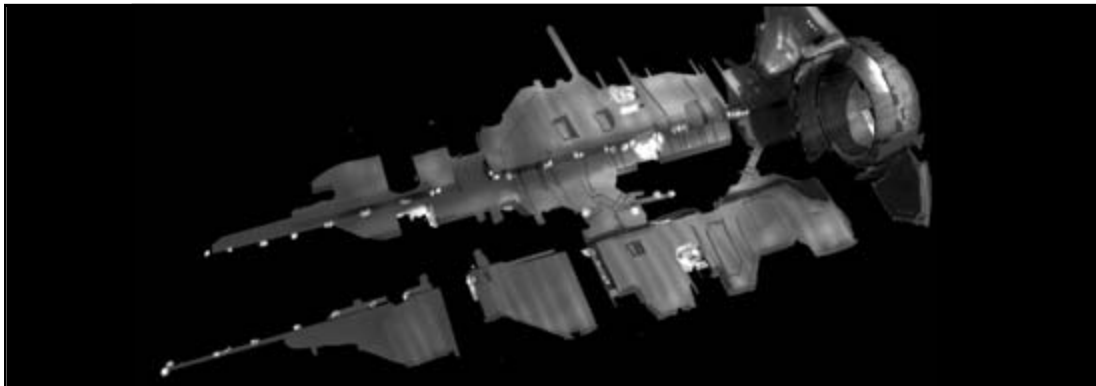
Ch. 5: Resource and Technology Management

Hiigaran Research

RESEARCH NAME	REQUIRED RESEARCH	REQUIRED SUBSYSTEM	COST	PROVIDES
Improved Bombs	None	Fighter Facility	1,500	Doubles Bomber performance against subsystems
Pulsar Corvette	None	Research, Corvette Facility	500	Unlocks Pulsar Corvettes
Mine Laying	None	Advanced Research, Corvette Facility	750	Unlocks Minelayers
Defense Field Frigate	None	Advanced Research, Frigate Facility	1,500	Unlocks Defense Field Frigates
Ion Platform	None	Research, Platform Facility	600	Unlocks Ion Platforms
Destroyer Chassis	None	Advanced Research, Capital Facility	1,000	Unlocks Destroyer
Battlecruiser Chassis	None	Advanced Research, Capital Facility	1,500	Unlocks Battlecruiser
Prox. Sensor Probe	None	Research	500	Unlocks Proximity Sensor Probes
Sensory Dist. Probe	None	Advanced Research	500	Unlocks Sensory Distortion Probe

Ability Upgrades

RESEARCH NAME	REQUIRED SUBSYSTEM	COST	PROVIDES
Collector Repair	Research	750	Collectors can repair Capital Ships
Enhanced Sensors	None	500	Scouts can "Ping"
Improved Torpedo	Research, Frigate Facility	1,000	Improved Damage vs. Frigates, Capital Ships
EMP	Research	500	Scout can perform EMP attacks





Ship Upgrades

SHIP	UPGRADE NAME	REQUIRED TECH	REQUIRED MODULE	COST	UPGRADE
Mothership	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research	500	Hull Points x 1.5
Mothership	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research	750	Hull Points x 2
Mothership	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research	500	Max Speed x 1.2
Mothership	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	None	Advanced Research	750	Speed x 1.35
Mothership	Imp. Manufacturing	None	Advanced Research	1,500	Speed Construction 30%
Carrier	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research, Capital Facility	750	Hull Points x 1.3
Carrier	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Research, Capital Facility	1,000	Hull Points x 1.6
Carrier	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Capital Facility	500	Speed x 1.2
Carrier	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Advanced Research, Capital Facility	1,000	Speed x 1.35
Carrier	Imp. Manufacturing	None	Advanced Research	1,500	Speed Construction 30%
Interceptor	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Research, Fighter Facility	None	300	Speed x 1.25
Interceptor	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Advanced Research, None Fighter Facility	None	300	Speed x 1.5
Bomber	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Fighter Facility	300	1.25 x Max Velocity
Bomber	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Advanced Research, Fighter Facility	500	Speed x 1.5
Gunship	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research, Corvette Facility	500	Hull Points x 1.3
Gunship	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research, Corvette Facility	750	Hull Points x 1.6
Gunship	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Corvette Facility	300	Speed x 1.2
Gunship	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Advanced Research, Corvette Facility	500	Speed x 1.35
Pulsar Gunship	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research, Corvette Facility	400	Hull Points x 1.3
Pulsar Gunship	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research, Corvette Facility	750	Hull Points x 1.6

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Ship Upgrades, continued

SHIP	UPGRADE NAME	REQUIRED TECH	REQUIRED MODULE	COST	UPGRADE
Pulsar Gunship	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Corvette Facility	300	Speed x 1.2
Pulsar Gunship	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Advanced Research, Corvette Facility	750	Speed x 1.35
Torpedo Frigate	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research, Frigate Facility	800	Hull Points x 1.3
Torpedo Frigate	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research, Frigate Facility	1,400	Hull Points x 1.6
Torpedo Frigate	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Frigate Facility	500	Speed x 1.2
Torpedo Frigate	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Advanced Research, Frigate Facility	750	Speed x 1.35
Ion Frigate	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research, Frigate Facility	800	Hull Points x 1.3
Ion Frigate	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research, Frigate Facility	1,400	Hull Points x 1.6
Ion Frigate	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Frigate Facility	500	Speed x 1.2
Ion Frigate	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Advanced Research, Frigate Facility	750	Speed x 1.35
Flak Frigate	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research, Frigate Facility	800	Hull Points x 1.3
Flak Frigate	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research, Frigate Facility	1,400	Hull Points x 1.6
Flak Frigate	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Frigate Facility	500	Speed x 1.2
Flak Frigate	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Advanced Research, Frigate Facility	750	Speed x 1.35
Battlecruiser	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Battlecruiser Chassis	Research, Capital Facility	2,000	Hull Points x 1.3
Battlecruiser	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research, Capital Facility	3,000	Hull Points x 1.6
Battlecruiser	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Capital Facility	1,000	Speed x 1.2



Ship Upgrades, continued

SHIP	UPGRADE NAME	REQUIRED TECH	REQUIRED MODULE	COST	UPGRADE
Battlecruiser	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Advanced Research, Capital Facility	1,500	Speed x 1.35
Destroyer	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Battlecruiser Chassis	Research, Capital Facility	1,000	Hull Points x 1.3
Destroyer	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research, Capital Facility	1,500	Hull Points x 1.6
Destroyer	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Capital Facility	1,000	Speed x 1.2
Destroyer	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Advanced Research, Capital Facility	1,500	Speed x 1.35
Gun Platform	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Battlecruiser Chassis	Research, Platform Control	500	Hull Points x 1.3
Gun Platform	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research, Platform Control	800	Hull Points x 1.6
Ion Beam Platform	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Battlecruiser Chassis	Research, Platform Control	500	Hull Points x 1.3
Ion Beam Platform	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research, Platform Control	800	Hull Points x 1.6
Resource Collector	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research	400	Hull Points x 1.5
Resource Collector	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research	800	Hull Points x 2
Mobile Refinery	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research	500	Hull Points x 1.3
Mobile Refinery	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research	1,000	Hull Points x 1.6
Shipyards	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research, Hyperspace	750	Hull Points x 1.3
Shipyards	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research, Hyperspace	1,500	Hull Points x 1.6
Shipyards	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Hyperspace	750	Speed x 1.2
Shipyards	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Advanced Research, Hyperspace	1,500	Speed x 1.35
Shipyards Manufacturing	Improved Manufacturing	None	Advanced Research, Hyperspace	1,000	Speed Construction 30%

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Hyperspace Research

RESEARCH NAME	REQUIRED RESEARCH	REQUIRED SUBSYSTEM	COST	PROVIDES
Hyperspace Cost Instantaneous	None	Research, Hyperspace	500	Hyperspace costs -20%
Hyperspace Cost Instantaneous	Hyperspace Cost Instantaneous	Advanced Research, Hyperspace	1,000	Hyperspace costs -40%
Hyperspace Recovery Time Instantaneous	None	Research, Hyperspace	500	Hyperspace recovery 33% faster
Hyperspace Recovery Time Instantaneous	Hyperspace Cost Instantaneous	Advanced Research, Hyperspace	1,000	Hyperspace costs -40%

Vaygr Technology and Modules

See Vaygr Tech Tree, pages 68-69.

**** Legend***

C	Carrier	SH	Shipyard
MS	Mothership	B	Battlecruiser

Production Modules

MODULE NAME	SHIP CLASS*	REQUIRED RESEARCH	REQUIRED SUBSYSTEM/MODULES	COST
Fighter Facility	C,MS,SH	None	None	450
Corvette Facility	C,MS,SH	Corvette Chassis	Research	725
Frigate Facility	C,MS,SH	Frigate Chassis	Research	900
Capital Facility	MS, SH	None	None	1,250

Ability Modules

MODULE NAME	SHIP CLASS*	REQUIRED RESEARCH	REQUIRED SUBSYSTEM/MODULES	COST
Platform Control	C,MS,SH	None	None	625
Research	C,MS,SH	None	None	500
Hyperspace	C,MS,SH,B	Hyperspace Gates	Research	1,000
Gravity Well	C,MS,SH,B	None	Research	1,500
Cloak Generator	C,MS,SH,B	None	Research	750
Fire Control	C,MS,SH,B	None	Advanced Research	1,500



TIER 1 TECH

VGR Mothership

Probe

Res. Collector

Mobile Refinery

Corvettes

Survey Scout

Fighter Facility

Assault Craft

Lance Beams

Lance Fighter

Fusion Bombs

Bomber

Improved Bombs

Fgh 1

Fgh 2

Turrets

Platform Controller

Platform Missiles

Gun Platform

Capital Ships

CapShip Facility

Destroyer

Carrier

SpC 1

SpC 2

Research and Modules

Hyperspace Sensors

Research

Advanced Sensor Array

Util 1

Util 2

TIER 2 TECH

Proximity Detector Probe

MS 1

MS 2

Corvette Facility

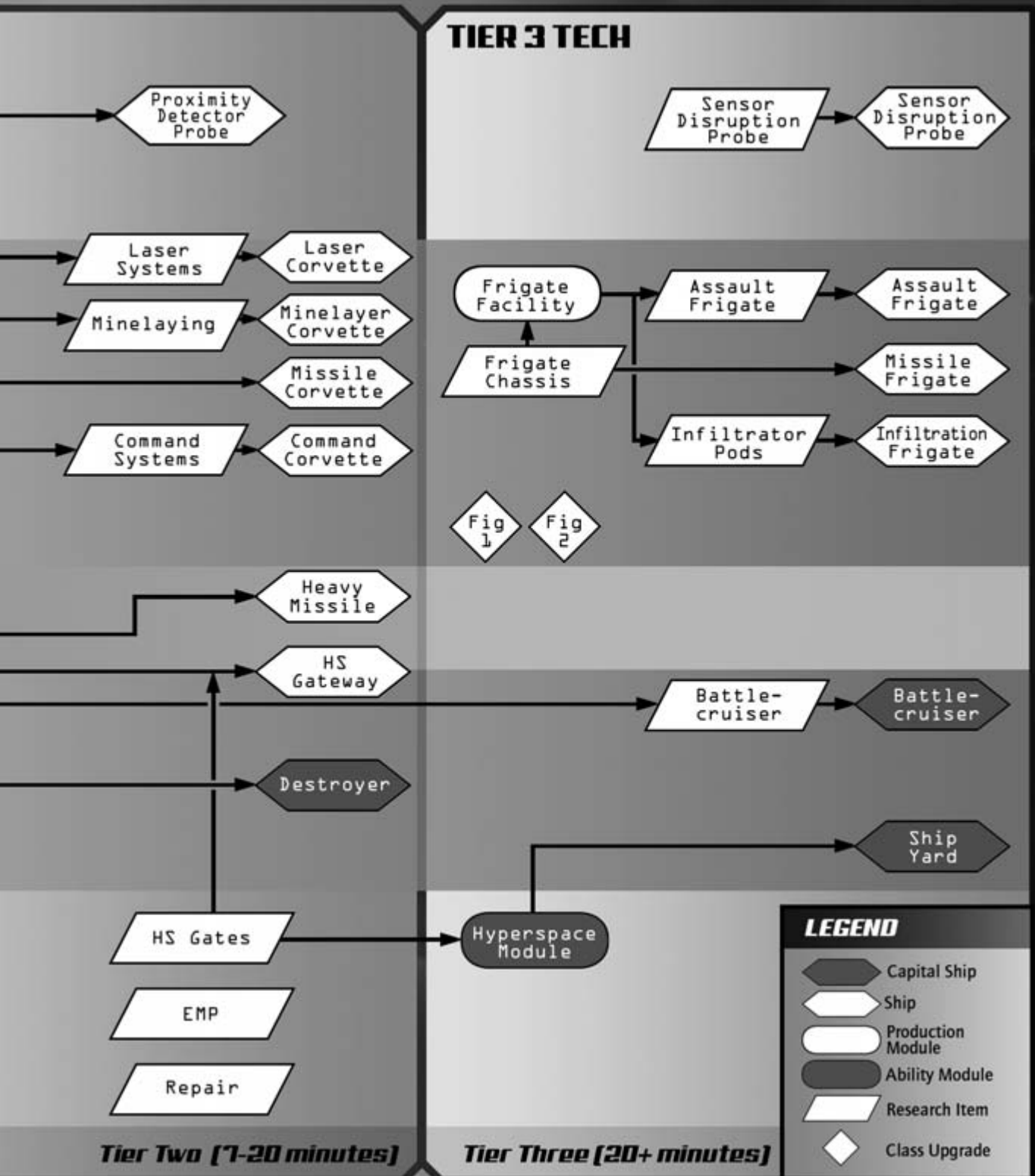
Corvette Chassis

Cor 1

Cor 2

Tier One (0-7 minutes)

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Sensor Modules

MODULE NAME	SHIP CLASS	REQUIRED RESEARCH	REQUIRED SUBSYSTEM/MODULES	COST
Hyperspace Sensors	C,MS,SH	None	None	250
Advanced Sensors Array	C,MS,SH	None	None	250

Vaygr Research

RESEARCH NAME	REQUIRED RESEARCH	REQUIRED SUBSYSTEM	COST	PROVIDES
Fusion Bombs	None	Research, Fighter Facility	250	Unlocks Bomber
Lance Beams	None	Research, Fighter Facility	250	Unlocks Lance Fighter
Laser Systems	Corvette Chassis	Research, Corvette Facility	500	Unlocks Laser Corvettes
Command Systems	Corvette Chassis	Research, Corvette Facility	500	Unlocks Command Corvettes
Minelaying	Corvette Chassis	Research, Corvette Facility	1,500	Unlocks Minelayer Corvettes
Assault Frigate	Frigate Chassis	Research, Frigate Facility	800	Unlocks Assault Frigate
Infiltrator Pods	Frigate Chassis	Research, Frigate Facility	1,000	Unlocks Infiltrator Frigate
Battlecruiser	None	Research, Capital Facility	2,500	Unlocks Battlecruiser
Destroyer	None	Research, Capital Facility	2,000	Unlocks Destroyer
Hyperspace Gates	None	Hyperspace	750	Unlocks Hyperspace Gates

Ability Upgrades

RESEARCH NAME	REQUIRED SUBSYSTEM	COST	PROVIDES
Collector Repair	Research	500	Collectors can repair Capital Ships
Enhanced Sensors	None	1,000	Scouts can "Ping"
Improved Bombs	Research, Fighter Facility	1,000	Improved Damage vs. Subsystems
EMP	Research	1,000	Scout can perform EMP attacks

Ch. 5: Resource and Technology Management

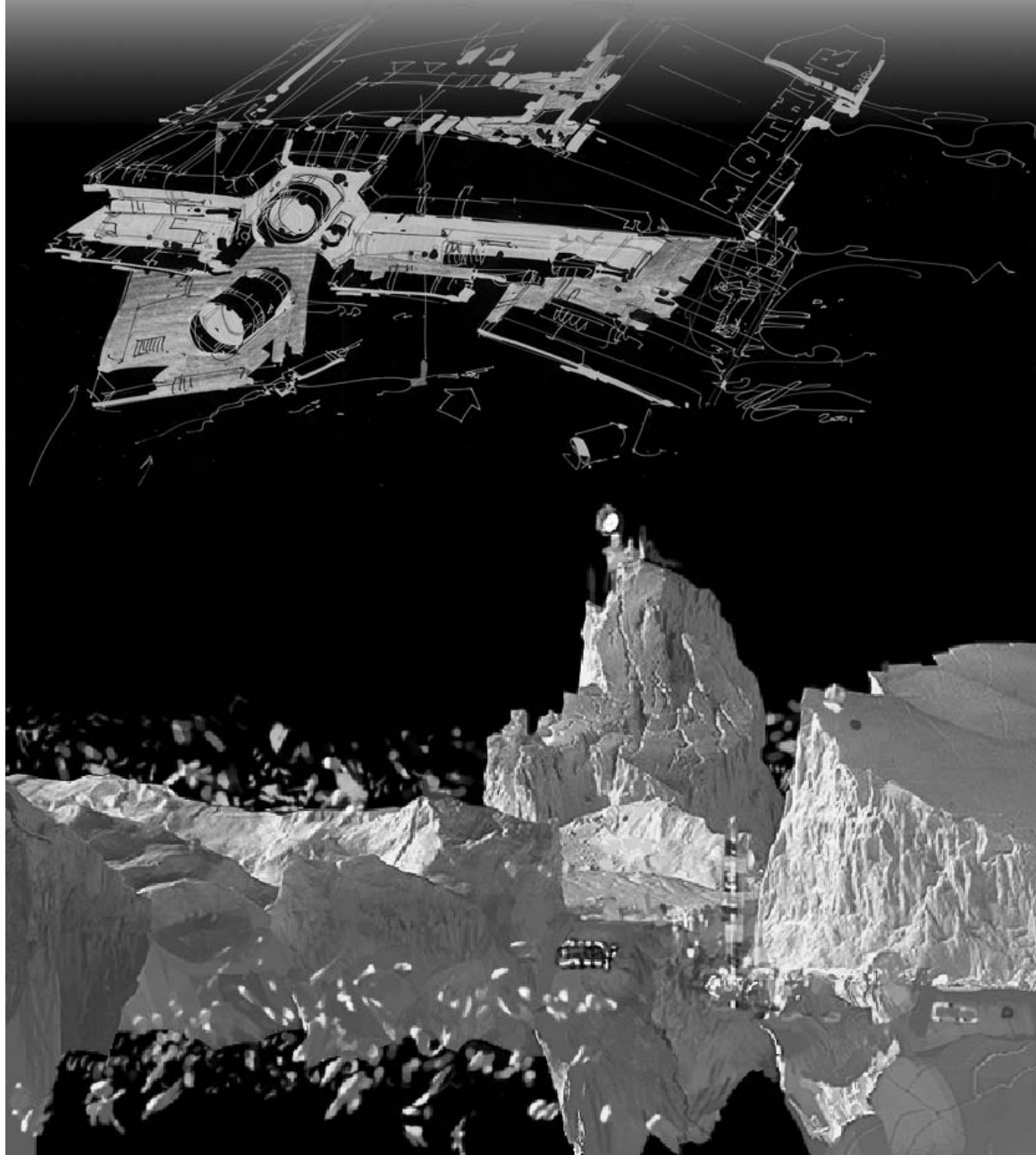
Ship Upgrades

SHIP	UPGRADE NAME	REQUIRED TECH	REQUIRED MODULE	COST	UPGRADE
Super Capital	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research, Capital Facility	4,000	Hull Points x 1.3
Super Capital	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Research, Capital Facility	6,000	Hull Points x 1.6
Super Capital	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Capital Facility	3,500	Speed x 1.2
Super Capital	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Research, Capital Facility	5,000	Speed x 1.35
Mothership	Imp. Manufacturing	None	Research	1,500	Speed Construction 30%
Carrier	Imp. Manufacturing	None	Research, Capital Facility	1,500	Speed Construction 30%
Shipyards	Imp. Manufacturing	None	Research, Hyperspace, Capital Facility	1,000	Speed Construction 30%
Fighter	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Research, Fighter Facility	None	600	Speed x 1.25
Fighter	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Research, Fighter Facility	None	1,000	Speed x 1.5
Corvette	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research, Corvette Facility	900	Hull Points x 1.5
Corvette	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Research, Corvette Facility	1,800	Hull Points x 2
Corvette	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Corvette Facility	800	Speed x 1.2
Corvette	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Research, Corvette Facility	1,600	Speed x 1.4
Frigate	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research, Frigate Facility	1,600	Hull Points x 1.3
Frigate	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Research, Frigate Facility	2,800	Hull Points x 1.6
Frigate	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	None	Research, Frigate Facility	1,000	Speed x 1.2
Frigate	Lvl 2 Speed Upgrade	Lvl 1 Speed Upgrade	Research, Frigate Facility	1,500	Speed x 1.35
Platform	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research, Platform Control	1,000	Hull Points x 1.5
Platform	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Research, Platform Control	1,600	Hull Points x 2
Utility	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	None	Research	1,200	Hull Points x 1.5
Utility	Lvl 2 Hull Upgrade	Lvl 1 Hull Upgrade	Research	2,400	Hull Points x 2



Conclusion

By now, you have a good idea of what's required to develop your fleet. You're familiar with the types of ships you'll be working with, their capabilities, and their limitations. In the next chapter, we'll get into the jump seat and see how all of this comes together in a combat situation. Chapter 6, "Advanced Combat Strategies" will show you how to apply what you've learned with tactics that really work.



CHAPTER 6: ADVANCED COMBAT STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION: FIGHTING SMART

You've done everything right. You've built up sector-spanning resource operations, and the resources are spilling in faster than you can spend them. You've decimated hostile resource operations wherever they've appeared. You're fielding vast squadrons against measly opponents. All that's left now is to wake up—you're dreaming.



Fig. 6-1. A formidable Vaygr Force arrives at the Hugaran system.

There are few things more pleasant to a fleet commander than enjoying a massive advantage in materiel over an opponent. Unfortunately, it doesn't happen very often. You don't get any great natural advantage over your opponents—those aren't biplanes that your Interceptors are up against. Rather than instantly dominating your enemy, you must often fight a horde of fire-spitting bogies for every RU out there. That's fine. In fact, that's just the way we like it.

Winning a battle is often not about numbers. With the right tactics and the right combination of forces, you can be significantly outnumbered and still come out on top.



Fig. 6-2a. This Vaygr force of Corvettes is the proper counter to a larger fleet of Hugaran Frigates

This chapter covers the mechanics of winning battles: how to get the most out of your ships, both formation wise and firepower wise; how to keep your fleet fighting as a unit rather than a mob; and how fighting with intelligence rather than by the numbers can help you do more with less. We'll then take a look at the different stages of a battle and identify what kind of priorities you should have at different stages. After you finish this "fleet-ops primer," you will have all the knowledge necessary to become a dangerous and wily opponent. And really, isn't that what it's all about?

EFFECTIVE COUNTERFIRE

Every ship class has a nemesis class, as well as another class that is relatively ineffective against it. The big guns of a Destroyer or Battlecruiser, for example, are great at cracking open Frigate hulls but aren't designed to track or kill fast-moving Fighters.

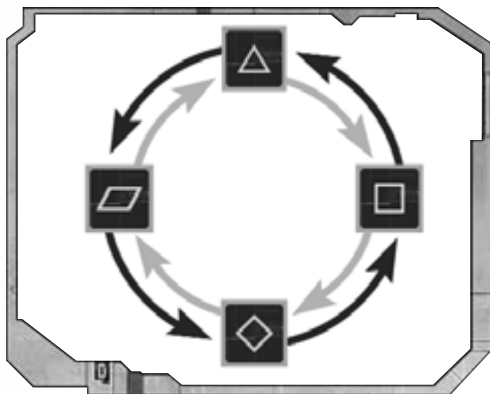


Fig. 6-2b. Dark arrows inflict maximum damage at minimal risk. Light arrows are suicide missions.

can build the maximum amount of Bombers at minimal cost.

With enough Production Facilities, you can quickly rebuild and "reshape" an entire fleet this way.

There are some exceptions to this rule, of course. The Vaygr in particular have a number of "role-busting" ships. The Lance Fighter is deadly against Corvettes, and the Laser Corvette is effective against big-hulled Frigates and Capital Ships. Both the Hiigarans and Vaygr have specific Anti-Fighter Frigates.

It's Never a Good Day to Die

One way to deal with unwanted or badly damaged units is by just throwing them into battle and letting them die. *Never* do this in *Homeworld2*. It takes a single key [?] to retire a ship selection. Retired ships are recycled, and you receive approximately 85 percent of their hull costs in RUs.

One place you can do this is with Interceptors/Assault Craft. Because they're cheap and don't require a lot of technology, you often build a lot of these early in a mission. Later on, other ships can perform their Anti-Bomber role. As you build up your Anti-Strikecraft capability, retire your Interceptors/Assault Craft so that you

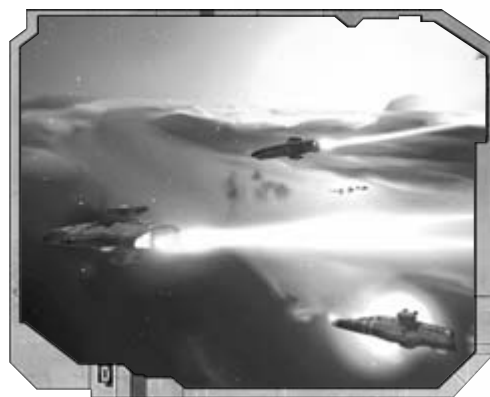


Fig. 6-3. The Pulsar Corvette: cheap and effective anti-Frigate fire.



FLEET OPERATIONAL LEVELS

There are three general levels of fleet formations commonly seen in *Homeworld2*. Identifying these, both in your enemy's fleet and your own, can help you decide whether or not to engage a formation, and with what level of force.

The largest operational fleet is the Main Battle Fleet (MBF). Your MBF is easy to identify—it's the largest concentration of combined-arms firepower that you have on the map. Because of its high strategic value, you should ensure that your MBF is a general-purpose force capable of dealing with any and all threats.



Fig. 6-4. The Main Battle Fleet

Lower in scale and power from the MBF is the taskforce. Like an MBF, a taskforce usually contains ships from a number of classes. Unlike an MBF, a taskforce is created to perform a certain job, so it is often unbalanced. You often create a taskforce by detaching elements from your Main Battle Fleet, then reattaching them once the job is done. The loss of a taskforce is usually a daunting blow, but it should never be a *critical* one.

The lowest level of fleet deployment is the skirmish force. Skirmish forces aren't generally strong enough to perform tactically significant tasks. They might harass a resourcing operation but lack the power to inflict serious damage before the enemy's had a chance to respond. Rather than destroying an opponent, a skirmish force is designed to distract and interfere with enemy momentum. Loss of a skirmish force should have a negligible influence on the strategic balance.

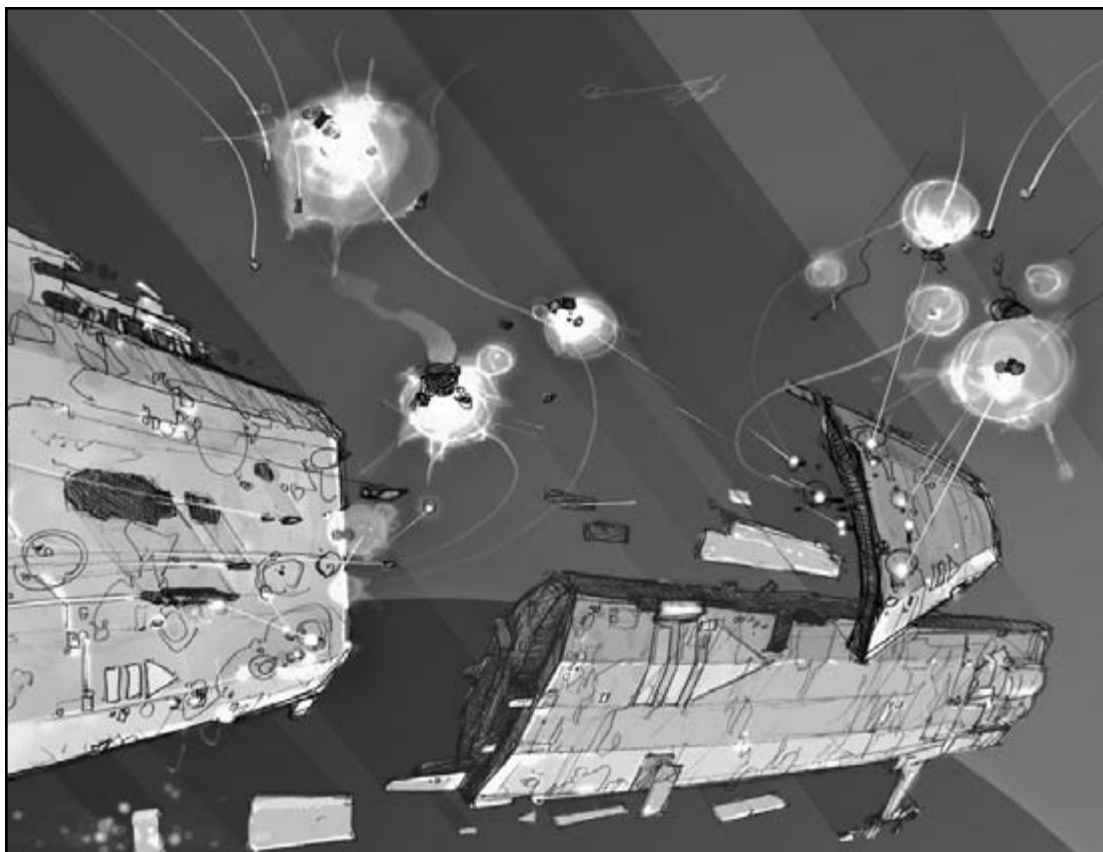
Using the Main Battle Fleet

Never risk your MBF in a battle unless you're certain it will end in victory. To avoid your opponent forcing an engagement before you're ready, there are a couple of things you can do.

- **Hyperspace-enable your MBF.** If your opponent launches an unexpected attack, making a tactical jump *out of there* enables you to survive with at least some of your core fleet intact.
- **Hyperspace-inhibit your opponent.** Build at least one Hyperspace Inhibitor in your MBF. Your opponent must then attack at hull speed, which gives you time to respond (or, if need be, jump).
- **Hyperspace-enable any Anti-Capital taskforce** that you build. This allows you to quickly recall the taskforce if a crisis arises.
- **Ensure that your MBF is a balanced force**, able to deal with threats from any class.
- **Keep your Anti-Fighter Fighters docked.** If your opponent can't see them, it increases the likelihood he'll attack with an inappropriate force—which you can promptly decimate. When docked aboard a hyperspace-enabled ship, you also gain the ability to instantly deploy your Anti-Fighter force anywhere on the map.



Fig. 6-5. Carrier's Hyperspace Module



Initially, your MBF is constrained to its primary defensive role: Protecting the Mothership/Flagship and your primary Production Facilities. Once your MBF has been properly outfitted, you can task it with strategic-level offensive missions.

- **Engaging the enemy's MBF**
- **Establishing definitive control over a resource zone**
- **Quickly destroying a hostile taskforce to weaken your opponent through attrition**

Using Taskforces

As its name suggests, a taskforce should be designed with a specific job in mind. You should also have a clear idea of what threats it will encounter while accomplishing its task. While you can perform offensive ops with "muddy" understandings of these issues, you'll just end up stretching your resources. Either your taskforces will be too big, constraining fleet ops elsewhere, or

it will be too small or poorly composed for its challenges, resulting in operational failure. There's no replacement for good intel. Deploy the probes or scouts and *know* what the enemy can field against you.

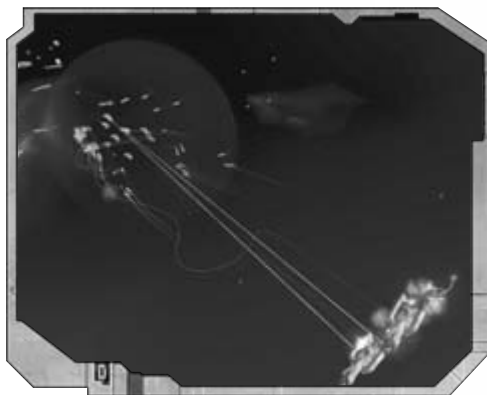


Fig. 6-6. *Anti-Destroyer taskforce in action*

Why Use Taskforces?

You can easily fight a battle without using a single taskforce, simply harvesting from uncontested resource zones until you've built up your Main Battle Fleet for the "first and last" set-piece engagement with the enemy's fleet. Why complicate things by deploying taskforces?

The simple answer is: risk. To ensure victory, go into the major battle with everything on your side. You want upgrade superiority, numerical superiority, and logistics [RU] superiority—preferably all in spades. By exploiting your opponent's every weakness *before* you commit to a major battle, you gradually tip the superiority curve your way.

After you decide on a job, choose the fleet elements to tackle it. To help you along, we've listed a few common tasks, and a ship complement to get the job done. This is not meant to be a definitive list; each threat you face is unique.

Example Taskforce Mission

This taskforce is designed to take out a resource operation defended by a Carrier and its defensive screen of six Interceptor squadrons, four Ion Cannon Platforms, and two Flak Frigates.

- Six Torpedo Frigates
- Eight Bomber squadrons with Improved Bombs
- Two Gunships
- Hyperspace-enabled Carrier

First, assign control groups to all of the ship types, and station the entire taskforce safely outside of the enemy's sensor range. Set the Carrier's launch policy to "Stay Docked" and dock the Bombers and Gunships.

Next, send in the Frigates, targeted on the enemy Ion Cannon Platforms. The enemy responds by sending its Interceptor force to engage the Frigates and starts building Bombers

to put up a more credible defense. Fortunately, the Interceptors' light weapons are ineffective against the heavy Frigate hulls—at least for the amount of time they're staying there.

As soon as the Interceptors have engaged the Frigates, hyperspace the Carrier in right beside the enemy Carrier. Immediately launch all Bombers, keeping the Gunships docked.

At this point, the enemy realizes that things are going horribly wrong and decides to jump out of there (leaving behind the defenseless Platforms and Resource Collectors). But your Bombers take out his Hyperspace Module. Maybe the enemy Flak Frigates can take down two Bomber squadrons, but they won't decimate your taskforce.



Fig. 6-7. Desperate times

As the only force left, the Interceptors are ineffective against this taskforce. Your Frigates further tilt the battle's momentum in your favor.

Anti-Destroyer Taskforce

Deploy a mixed contingent of Ion and Torpedo Frigates (with improved, Anti-Capital weaponry) in the "Capital Phalanx" Strikegroup formation. The Frigates form a tight wall. Assign a Defense Field Frigate to Guard the Frigate at the center of the wall formation. Now, go Destroyer hunting. Use focused fire to quickly bring down your target. If you encounter heavy counterfire, turn on the Defense Field.

Further refine this taskforce by adding a couple of Flak Frigates to fend off Bomber strikes. Add a hyperspace-enabled Carrier to turn this into a rapid-deployment, Anti-Destroyer unit.

EFFECTIVE FIREPOWER: GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR FLEET

The only difference between an army and a mob is organization. Fortunately, your *Homeworld2* fleet has strong organizational capabilities. By learning how to use these, and when to countermand, you can get the most "bang" for your RUs.

Strikegroups

Strikegroup formations are designed to bring your entire fleet into battle as a coherent whole. Besides the unique advantages of any particular formation, you benefit from the fact that Strikegroup ships are never in danger of being "caught out in the open" by their nemesis unit. Because of this, Strikegroups can be decisively more effective than a rag-tag line of squadrons heading toward a battle. The different Strikegroup formations, and their functions, are detailed in Chapter 4.

Control Groups

Once it joins the battle, a Strikegroup doesn't confer any organizational abilities on your fleet. Ships engage the most appropriate target they can find. When this happens, it can really start to look like a giant fiery hairball out there.

Being able to pluck all your Anti-Fighters from such a hairball can take a second or two if you have to do it manually. Remember: you *don't* have to do it manually. Always assign control groups to each of your ship classes so that you can quickly assign them tasks. It also helps to keep your control group assignments consistent from battle to battle.

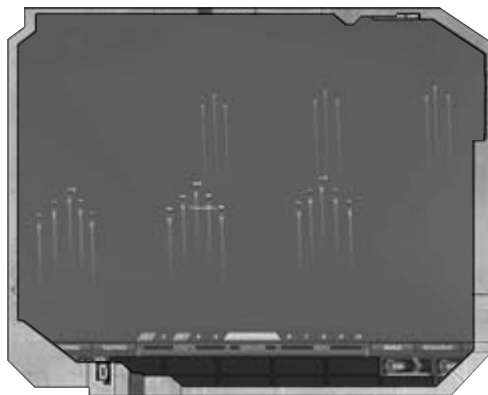
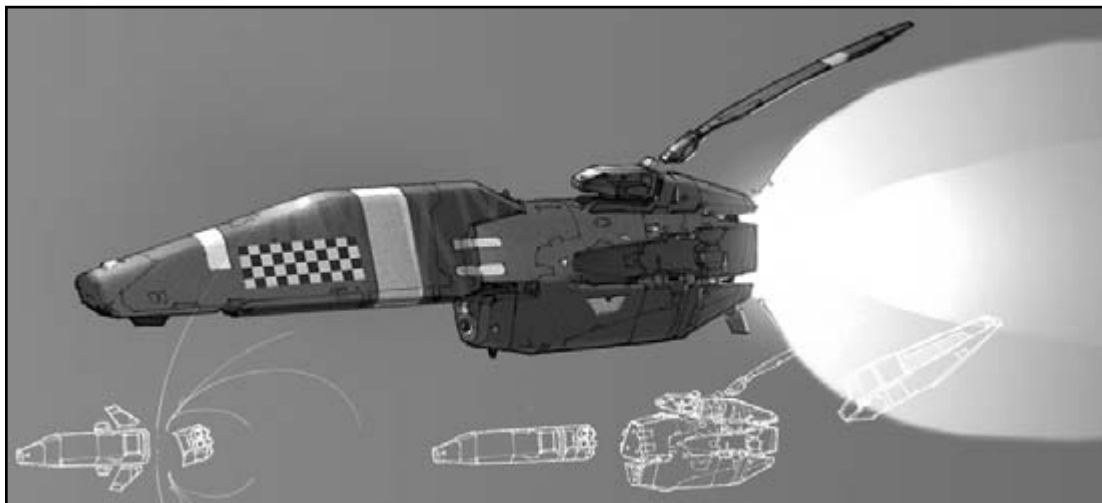


Fig. 6-8. Control groups make it easy to select all the Interceptors in the friendly force.

Focused Fire: When to Use It

Imagine two identical fleets of eight Ion Cannons meeting in battle. Only one of the fleets uses focused fire—concentrating all weapons on a single enemy ship. In this situation, the "focused" fleet wins—*every time*. This is because, by the time the "focused" fleet has destroyed one of the "unfocused" ships, its own vessels have all been



mildly damaged. By the time it's destroyed two ships, all of its vessels are slightly more damaged. By the time it's destroyed three ships, a couple of its own ships might need to slip off for repair. After this, it quickly becomes a rout.

Focused fire isn't the default behavior of any Strikegroup or control group—you must intervene to make it happen. Left to their own devices, ships simply select the best target they can see. They put *some* priority on attacking an already-damaged ship, but they also consider a closer target a more viable one.

The ability to quickly put a great deal of purpose-specific, concentrated firepower on a single target is one of the great advantages of using control groups.



Fig. 6-9. Focused fire can bring down the biggest targets in a short period of time.

CAUTION

Use focused fire only with appropriate weapons for your target. It does absolutely no good to focus fire your Assault Craft on a Battlecruiser. For this reason, avoid using focused fire on a fleet-wide basis.

Assigning Multiple Control Groups

Ships can belong to multiple control groups at the same time. Use this to create two “overlapping” sets of control groups. The first set should be assigned by ship type (Assault Craft, Bomber, and so on). You can then assign the second group by *role* (Anti-Capital, Anti-Fighter, and so on).

By doing this, you can easily task an Anti-Fighter force of Assault Craft and Heavy Missile Frigates to guard a Carrier from a bombing raid. When the raid is broken, you can just as easily dispatch the Interceptors to chase down the Bombers, leaving the slow Frigates behind.

BUILD PRIORITIES

Deciding what to build is almost half the battle. Your build decisions depend on several things: the state of the game, the number of exploitable resource zones, your opponent's behavior, and many other possible factors. We'll now look at several stages in a battle, and what kinds of priorities you should have.

Early Game: the First Minutes

You generally start with one nearby resource zone. Since your Flagship can support up to 10 Resource Collectors with full efficiency, your first effort should be to build up to this level. With 10 Resource Collectors, you can pull in approximately 2,250 RUs per minute. If possible, move your Flagship closer to the resource zone to minimize the Resource Collectors' round trip.

After this point, immediately start considering “rush” possibilities—either building one for yourself, or at least defending against one. In the single-player missions, the computer opponent generally tries to defeat you by using a rush tactic.

NOTE

Early "rush" tactics are Strikecraft based.

Typically, the goal is to research Improved Bombs, then send a wing or so of Bombers to take out an opponent's Fighter Facility.

With the danger of additional Interceptors gone, the Bombers can then destroy the Resource Drop-Off point, preventing the victim from accumulating resources. If this can be done, the game quickly becomes a rout.

TIP

The obvious defense to this rush is a contingent of Anti-Fighter Fighters. Keep them docked so that the enemy can't see them until it's too late, and use focused fire to quickly reduce the threat level.

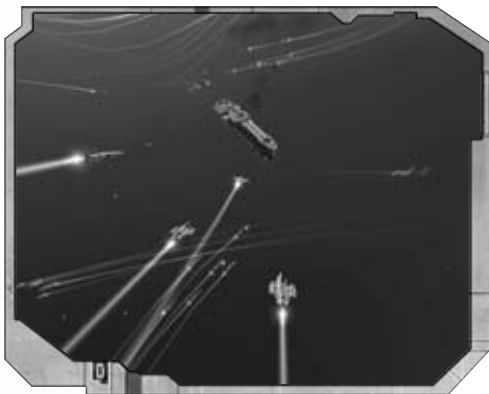


Fig. 6-10. A fully loaded launch bay launches a surprise attack on this Hiigaran Destroyer.

Once you've reached this point, you should have two primary goals: building up the defenses around the Flagship and developing a second resource zone *before your opponent does*. Deploy a Scout squadron or a Probe to each of the "neutral" resource zones to watch for enemy activity. Meanwhile, consider building a Frigate Facility (if Hiigaran) or a Corvette Facility (if Vaygr).

Getting an Early Jump on the Second Resource Zone

Consider building a Hyperspace Module aboard your Carrier very early in the game, then deploy it to a second resource zone as the drop-off vessel for a resource op. Don't build out a full operation right away; if your enemy is watchful, he'll soon be all over you. One or two collectors add a steady amount to your RU balance. Build up a small contingent of (docked) Strikecraft for defense. If the enemy appears with anything more than you can handle, quickly dock the Resource Collectors (if you have time) and hyperspace out of there—preferably to another untapped resource zone.

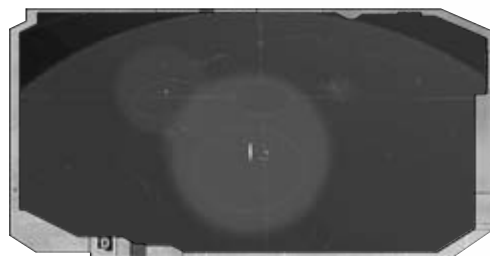


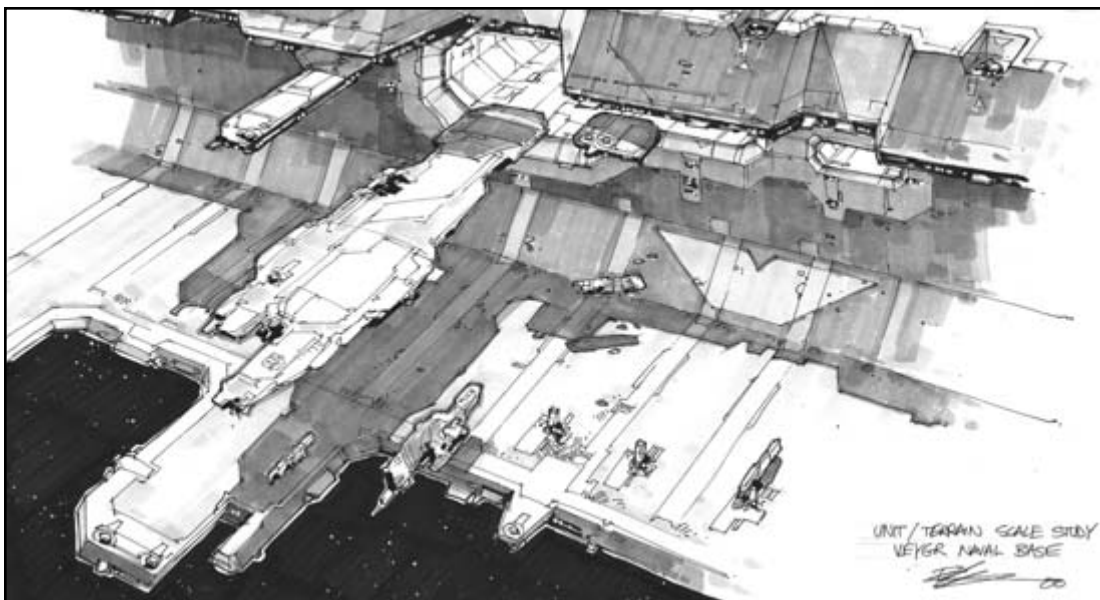
Fig. 6-11. Developing the second resource zone

As you get breathing space, build a Corvette Facility (if Vaygr) or Frigate Facility (if Hiigaran). Deploy an Anti-Frigate force, followed by an Anti-Fighter screen. Remember: this entire force can hyperspace back to your Mothership if necessary, so don't worry about "overbuilding."

Platforms are a good, cheap, initial defense layer. Eventually, they become vulnerable to long-range fire of Capital Ships, but they're still effective as an inner line of defense when backed up by longer-range weapons.

Early Game: Targets of Opportunity

Early offense is a matter of exploiting weaknesses in your enemy's deployment. You don't yet have the strength for a full frontal assault, so concentrate your efforts on the "chinks in the armor." To accomplish this task, you need good intel. Dispatch Probes or Scouts to determine the hostile fleet disposition, and build the appropriate counters.



By now your opponent has probably made moves on a second resource zone, or is soon about to. Locate this position—it is probably the least-defended point. Build a taskforce with appropriate counterunits and attempt to frustrate, if not outright destroy, this outpost. Do it early, before it becomes entrenched. You should also begin planning your own second resource op by now, if you've not already done so.

Another activity for this point in the battle is the probing attack. This is more an intelligence-gathering tool than any actual attempt to inflict damage. You want to know your opponent's behavior: reaction time, willingness to break-up his fleet's integrity, and so on. The more you learn, the more you can exploit.

Rolling Thunder: Building Offensive Potential

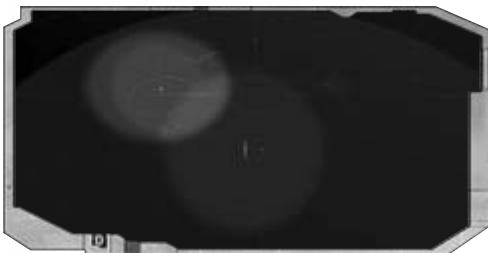


Fig. 6-12. Ready to engage

From midgame on, massive battles between Capital and Super Capital Ships become more and more common. The entire journey in *Homeworld2* is about building up your fleet. Surviving in this hostile environment requires strong logistics.

- **You must have strong resource operations to replace your destroyed ships. Attrition is expensive. Unfortunately, it's difficult to avoid in this stage of battle.**
- **You should have multiple Production Facilities for the core types of ships in your fleet. Limited Production Facilities are just as much a bottleneck as a limited RU stream.**

Always try to minimize losses for your most expensive ships, even at the cost of sacrificing lesser hulls. Besides the cost, Super Capital Ships take a long time to build and can quickly clog up your Production Facilities. Remember: A Hyperspace Module may add to the upfront cost of a Destroyer, but it more than pays for itself if you can just *once* pull the ship from battle before it is destroyed.

Always keep your build queues full. Even if you've reached your population cap for Battlecruisers, you can still have "one in the hopper." The Production Facility immediately

begins construction as soon as your population decreases.

One of the best things about hyperspace is that it allows you to use your defensive fleet as your offensive fleet as well. Put a Gravity Well Generator aboard your Mothership to prevent counterattacks, then jump your entire defensive fleet to an enemy-

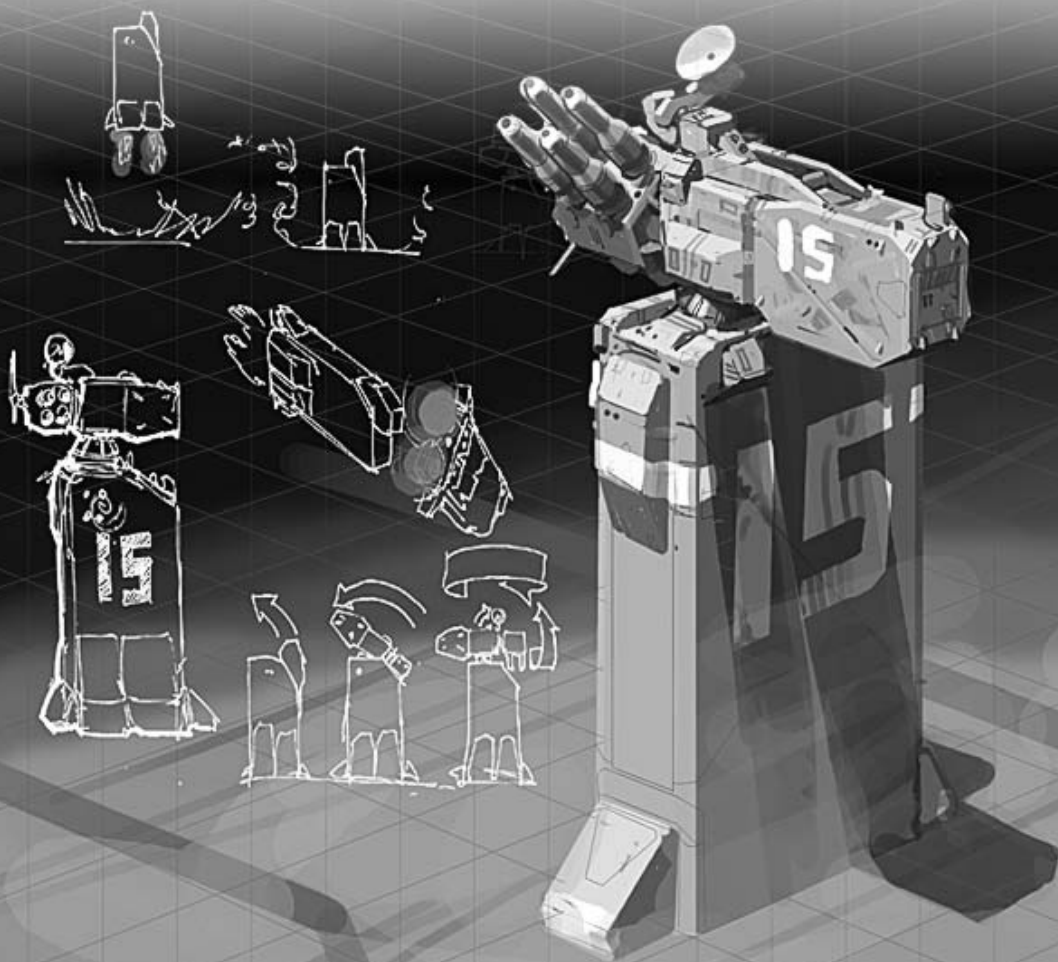
held location. Watch the battle indicators (the little arrows that appear on the ATI during battle). Jump back out of there if things start going poorly.

Wherever possible, include at least one Gravity Well Generator with your fleet. This prevents your opponent from "jumping in" reinforcements.

CONCLUSION

We've covered a lot of ground here. You should now have a good idea of how to maximize your fleet's development by ensuring good logistics, avoiding bottlenecks, and getting the most out of your ships with focused fire and Strikegroups.

In the next chapter, we begin the walkthrough of the single-player campaign. This walkthrough provides you with some real-life examples of the approaches introduced here. To get the most out of the walkthrough, continue to refer to the previous few chapters. This will help you develop a deep understanding of what it takes to become an effective *Homeworld 2* fleet commander.



CHAPTER 7: THE SIEGE OF HIIGARA

MISSION 01: DERELICT

This mission opens with the *Pride of Hiigara*'s shakedown trials while she's still docked at the covert Tanis Base.

Mission Objectives

Primary

- Test resourcing system.
- Build Fighter Facility.
- Build Interceptor squadron.
- Destroy Target Drones.
- Destroy Vaygr forces at Chimera Station.

Secondary

- Build Bomber squadron.
- Destroy Hyperspace Gates.

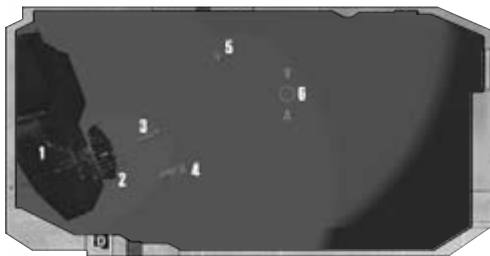


Fig. 7-1. Mission 1 Sector Map

- 1: Tanis Base
- 2: The *Pride of Hiigara*
- 3: Station NeMean
- 4: Station Xanhus
- 5: Perimeter Station Chimera
- 6: Target Drone Formation

Mission Strategy

SHAKEDOWN TRIALS

Your first objective is to use the Resource Collector to harvest some containers placed near the Mothership. There are 4,200 Resource Units (RUs)

here in total, but this trial is considered complete after you've retrieved 700 RUs worth. Leave the Resource Collector harvesting the rest of the containers while you move to the next objective: building a Fighter Facility.

The *Pride of Hiigara* is still an empty hull at this point. Your first task in getting her ready is to build a Fighter Facility. Select the Build button (**B**) at the top-right of the taskbar. Then select the Fighter tab, represented by the Triangle Tactical Icon. Once construction is complete, you're informed of your third objective: building an Interceptor squadron at your newly christened Fighter Facility.

To build the Interceptor squadron, access the "Fighter" tab of the Build Manager, where the Interceptor appears as an option. If you've been harvesting resources all along, you have enough to build several squadrons. Click repeatedly to put four squadrons in the build queue. Save the rest of your resources for building Bombers when the time comes.

When you've built one squadron, the next objective appears: target practice. Be sure that you have four or five squadrons of Interceptors before you attack. While shooting down a wall of Target Drones may not seem like a grueling trial, events start happening quickly after the Target Drones are destroyed. After you have your force assembled, click and drag to select all your Interceptors, and assign them to Group 1 (**Ctrl** + **F1**) so you can easily select them later in the mission.

DEFENDING CHIMERA

As the last Target Drone explodes into space dust, Perimeter Station Chimera chimes in with a bogey warning. It seems that Tanis Base is not so secret after all. Seven Vaygr Bomber squadrons appear, intent on preventing the *Pride* from ever leaving the berth at Tanis. In response, Chimera scrambles a squadron of Interceptors to augment your forces. Even though you're outnumbered to some degree, Bombers pose little threat to the agile Interceptors. In fact, the Bombers completely ignore your Interceptors as they race toward Chimera Station.



As soon as the Vaygr Bombers appear, select your Interceptors, hit **[ctrl]**, and left-click-drag a box around the Bombers to perform a group attack. Press the attack until the entire Vaygr force is space dust.

THE FIRST WAVE AT TANIS BASE

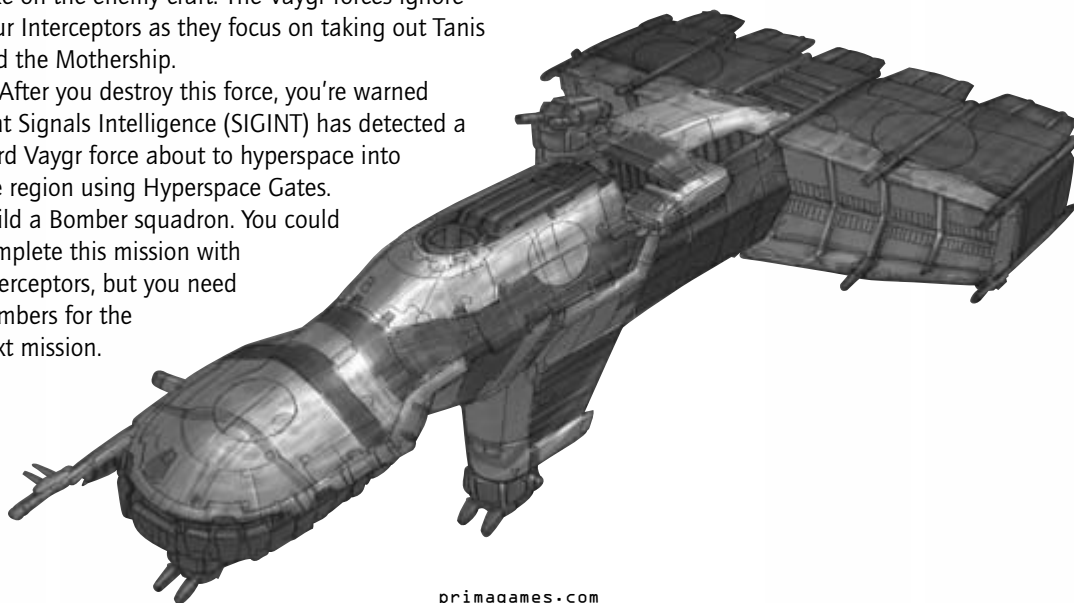
Before you can carve any notches in your Autogun barrels, a second wave appears. Three Bombers and a Heavy Missile Frigate hyperspace in beside Tanis Base and immediately begin the assault. The Vaygr obviously know about the *Pride* and are determined to destroy it here. Emergency launch procedures are initiated.

Quickly move your Interceptor force back to take on the enemy craft. The Vaygr forces ignore your Interceptors as they focus on taking out Tanis and the Mothership.

After you destroy this force, you're warned that Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) has detected a third Vaygr force about to hyperspace into the region using Hyperspace Gates. Build a Bomber squadron. You could complete this mission with Interceptors, but you need Bombers for the next mission.

TIP

Remember that your fleet carries over from mission to mission in *Homeworld 2*; this is called the persistent fleet concept. Always consider this when building up your fleet. Don't build eight Interceptor squadrons here when you really need a mix of craft for an effective fighting force.



VAYGR AT THE GATES

You now face attack by a force of six Bomber squadrons and an Assault Craft squadron, with three Hyperspace Gates posing the threat of additional hostiles. Destroy the Assault Craft first, then the Bombers, and finally the Hyperspace Gates. Do it right and you shouldn't lose a single ship.

TIP

No losses are good losses. If a squadron is becoming damaged, dock it [D] with the Mothership. Once it has been repaired, the squadron autolaunches again, ready to do battle. If you really can't spare the hulls, you can also dock individual ships.



Fig. 7-2. The final moment for Tanis Base

EVACUATION

Destruction of the second Hyperspace Gate brings word that long-range sensors have detected a massive inbound Vaygr force. It appears as soon as you destroy the third gate, and there's no way to stop it—yet. The *Pride* makes an emergency launch. You've successfully completed Mission 1.

MISSION 02: ANGEL MOON

Escaping from the imminent destruction of Tanis Base, you receive word that Vaygr forces are on the attack throughout the sector. A massive fleet is already en route to your Homeworld, Hiigara. To become operational, the *Pride of Hiigara* must rendezvous with its crew. This requires you to hyperspace to the Hiigara System, just as the Vaygr fleet begins to arrive.

Mission Objectives

Primary

- Protect at least four Transports.

Secondary

- Destroy the Vaygr Carrier's Fighter Facility and engines.
- Build a Resource Collector.
- Build a Corvette Facility.

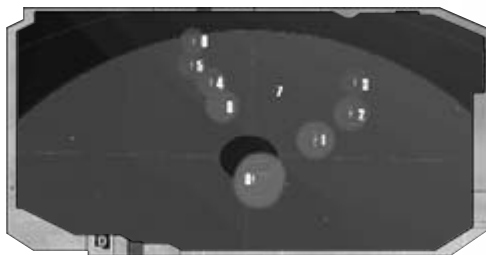


Fig. 7-3. Mission 2 Sector Map

- 1-6: Bishop Transports
- 7: Vaygr Carrier
- 8: Bomber Escort
- 9: Mothership

Mission Strategy SAVE THE TRANSPORTS

Start this mission with a minimum of three Interceptor and two Bomber squadrons, plus a Resource Collector. Put two Resource Collectors in the build queue while you deal with the first order

of business: the threat to Transports Bishop One and Bishop Two.

TIP

Set your Interceptors to use *aggressive* tactics [**F4**] when dealing with targets that pose little threat, such as Bombers. This maximizes the Interceptors' firepower.

Dispatch your force toward Bishop One and destroy the Vaygr Bombers there. You receive a warning about a Vaygr Carrier in the vicinity, but don't attack it yet. Doing so triggers a wave of attackers, and you should build your fleet before taking them on. Instead, move your forces to protect Bishop Two. Through attrition, weaken this force down to a Bomber or two, but don't completely destroy it because this also triggers reinforcements. Break your Interceptors and Bombers into separate Strikeforces now, and position them between Bishops Two and Three.

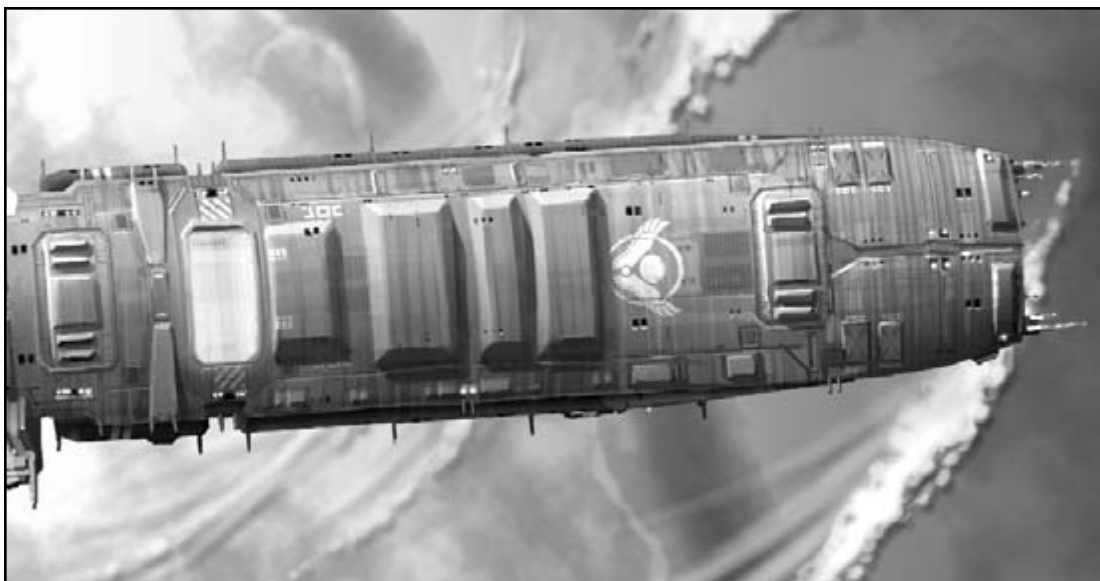
THE CORVETTE FACILITY



Fig. 7-4. Surgical Strike on a subsystem

Sit tight now while your Resource Collectors build up your RU balance. After Bishop One docks with the Mothership, two things happen: the Corvette Facility is unlocked, and the Vaygr Carrier launches reinforcements. Immediately build the Corvette subsystem. Queue up two Gunships as soon as they become available.





SUBSYSTEM ATTACK

Dispatch your Bomber squadrons to disable the Carrier's Fighter Facility. (Zoom in close to the Carrier to target its subsystems.) After they've accomplished this, target them on the Carrier's engines. Finally, when there's no chance of the Carrier escaping, destroy the ship itself. Two squadrons are sufficient for these tasks. If you have additional squadrons available, task them to guard Bishop Four.

STRAFE THE VAYGR BOMBER FORCES



Fig. 7-5. *Sobanis to the rescue*

Your Interceptors must deal with the reinforcements from the Carrier. Destroy the enemy forces harassing

Bishop Three, then retask them to guard Bishop Five. Although Bishop Four is in more danger, you soon see a wing of Vaygr Frigates (two Heavy Missile, two Assault) hyperspace in. While the Missile Frigates are fair game, you *don't* want your Interceptors to tangle with the Assault Frigates.

The Friendship of a Sobani

The friendship of a key ally in the fight against the Vaygr comes in the form of a Sobani, who joined the Hugaran navy as captain of an assault frigate battle group. He's instrumental in your fight against the Vaygr, proving his loyalty to the Hugarans despite the overwhelming odds. Captain Soban is a valiant and admirable officer, one you're sure to be pleased to have on your side.

SOBANIS TO THE RESCUE

As they are built or complete their previous tasks, have your Gunships and Bombers protect Bishop Four. This is the most vulnerable of the Transports. It won't take long for the Heavy Missile Frigates to destroy her if they're left alone. Fortunately, help soon arrives. Captain Soban hyperspaces in with a deuce of Ion Cannon Frigates and Torpedo

Frigates, perfectly stationed to draw fire from the Vaygr Capital Ships. Provide his fleet whatever assistance you can.

TIP

Although you only have to save four Transports to fulfill mission objectives, save them all. Each Transport contains valuable resources.

- Bishop One: Subsystem and engineering personnel [Corvette Facility]
- Bishop Two: Research personnel [permits ship upgrade research]
- Bishop Three: Engine and power plant crews [Mothership engines fully operational]
- Bishop Four: Sensors crew [sensors fully operational]
- Bishop Five: Two Elite Gunship squadrons
- Bishop Six: Two Elite Bomber squadrons

TIP

As soon as you rescue the majority of the Mothership's crew members from the Transports, they work furiously to get the Corvette Facility online. Once this is accomplished, crank out a few Corvette Gunships and begin the Pulsar Cannon research on the Research menu. You need a few of these squadrons to finish this mission and do well in the next one.

TIME TO LEAVE

With the Transports safely docked, Captain Soban explains that it's the Mothership herself, and the hyperspace core at her heart, that the Vaygr are after. You have no choice but to abandon Hiigara to its fate while you rebuild your forces—and try to stay out of Vaygr hands.

MISSION 03: SARUM

Arriving at the border region, your goal is to use the Shipyard Nabaal to rebuild your fleet strength so that you can end the siege of Hiigara. As you arrive, Captain Elohim on Nabaal sends a distress call—the Shipyard is under attack.

Mission Objectives

Primary

- Protect Shipyard Nabaal.
- Repair Shipyard.
- Destroy Probes.
- Destroy or Capture Vaygr fleet.

Secondary

- Build Mobile Refinery

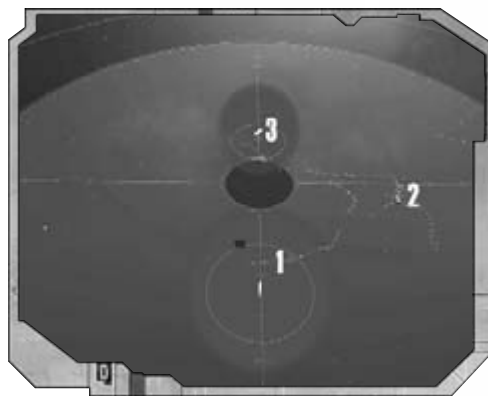


Fig. 7-6. Mission 3 Sector Map

- 1: Resource Zone Alpha
- 2: Resource Zone Bravo
- 3: Shipyard Nabaal

Mission Strategy

SAVE THE NABAAL

Your force at Sarum should include six or more Interceptor squadrons, along with a couple of Bomber and Gunship squadrons and at least one Resource Collector. Hold one Interceptor squadron in reserve near the Mothership. Dispatch the rest to take on the Shipyard's attackers—a wing of Bombers escorted by Missile Corvettes, Assault

Craft, and a Heavy Missile Frigate. The Interceptors arrive on station much faster than the Gunships. With the Anti-Fighter capabilities of the Missile Corvettes and Assault Craft, this would usually be suicidal. However, the raider Corvettes ignore you as they pound the Shipyard. You might also send the Gunships, but they probably won't arrive until the battle's almost over. Instead, dispatch your Gunships and Bombers to the far resource zone at the Mothership's two o'clock, designated "Zone Bravo."

Build up your Resource Collector fleet to three vessels and task them to harvesting the nearby asteroids. Then create one of the newly available Mobile Refineries and send it to Zone Bravo. Build two more Collectors and set them harvesting in Bravo as well.

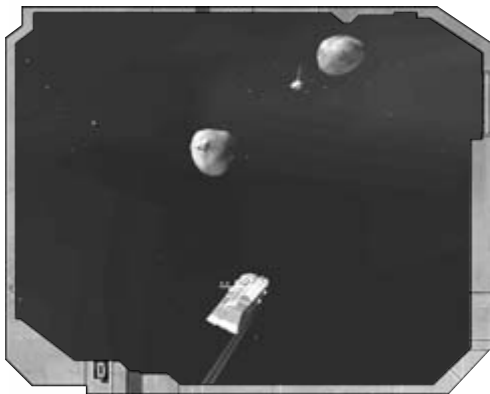


Fig. 7-7. A Resource Collector in action

PLATFORM CONSTRUCTION

Once you start a remote resourcing operation, you receive a message that platform defenses have been researched and are available for construction. Go to the Build menu and build a Platform Controller. Then crank out inexpensive Gun Platforms. They're effective at defending against Fighter attacks. After you build up at least five platforms, group them together and give them a move order to the remote resourcing location at Zone Bravo. Keep building at least another five Ion Cannon Platforms and move them to support the Shipyard.

CAUTION

Platforms get only a single move order. That means you should carefully select the place where you want to deploy them. Double-check the intended location with the movement disk by pressing **[M]** and rotating the camera. If you move a platform to a wrong location, you must scuttle it and build another one.

One effective strategy for countering the Infiltration Frigate assault later in this mission is to build up Gun Platforms and research Ion Cannon technology. Then build up at least another six platforms of each type (Ion and Gun). Issue them a "move order" to place them near the Shipyard. There are more Vaygr on the way, and these platforms can help turn the tide in your favor.



Fig. 7-8. An effective platform defense moves into place.

TIP

Always assign your Mobile Refineries to guard **[G]** the Collectors they are servicing. This shortens the Resource Collectors' roundtrip travel time and also provides them with an effective screen against Strikecraft.

REPAIR THE SHIPYARD

After you vanquish the Shipyards raiders, you receive a new research option: Resource Collector repairs. This permits Resource Collectors to repair damage to other ships. Research this immediately and send a single Resource Collector to fix the Shipyards by pressing **[Y]** while simultaneously clicking the Shipyards.

DESTROY THE PROBES

Having detected your reinforcements, Vaygr Command dispatches three Probes: one near the Shipyards, one near the Mothership, and another near Zone Bravo. Destroy each of these with the closest ship you have, then rendezvous your Interceptors with the rest of your forces at Zone Bravo.

PROTECT THE RESOURCING OPERATION



Fig. 7-9. Bombing run on a Vaygr Carrier

A Vaygr spoiling force now hyperspaces in near Zone Bravo. Target your Bombers on the Carrier while your Interceptors take on the Laser Corvettes and Lance Fighters. Your Gunships' most suitable targets are the Missile Corvettes. Check your squadrons throughout this battle; dock anyone that's been hammered at the Shipyards.

INFILTRATORS AT THE SHIPYARD

Soon after your forces return to the Shipyards, repairs there should be complete. Once this happens, the Shipyards releases a shiny new Carrier into your service. This Carrier even has a Frigate

Facility, further broadening your construction options. Move the Carrier back, halfway between the Shipyards and the nearby resource zone, and start building Flak Frigates and at least one Marine Frigate.

You don't have your Carrier for more than a moment or two before you receive another warning of inbound Vaygr. This time, they use Infiltration Frigates to attempt to take over the Shipyards. Two can play at that game, though, especially now that Marine Frigates are unlocked. Queue up four of these vessels on your Carrier. While you wait for these to be built, fend off the Infiltration Frigates and their escort of Assault Craft and Assault Frigates.

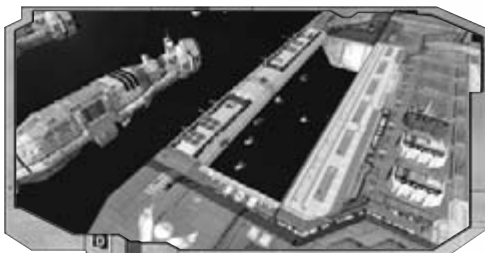


Fig. 7-10. Infiltrator Frigates attempt to take over the Shipyards.

NOTE

When a boarding unit is attacking a vessel, a blue "boarding progress" bar appears beneath the target's health bar. When this bar is completely blue, the boarding is complete and the vessel falls under the attacker's control.

Before you have a chance to wipe out the first wave, Vaygr reinforcements appear. Three Carriers start throwing more Infiltration Frigates at you, backed by Heavy Missile Frigates, Assault Frigates, and Assault Craft. The Assault Craft attack Marine Frigates if they can get within range. Deny them, and hold your Marine Frigates back until you've attained local supremacy.

LOSING THE SHIPYARD

If the Vaygr do manage to commandeer the Shipyards, the autodestruct sequence will activate after five minutes. Throw every Marine Frigate you have at recapturing the Shipyards. That's the only way to get it back.

CAPTURING THE CARRIERS

You now have four Marine Frigates with relatively friendly skies between them and the Vaygr Carriers. Task one to board each Carrier, with the fourth sent along as a reserve (alternately, use it to capture an Infiltration Frigate).

Although the Carriers blast away with their point defense weaponry, you shouldn't lose a single Marine Frigate. Congratulations: you've just gained control of an entire wing of Carriers. Unfortunately, Hiigaran engineers cannot make use of Vaygr Production Facilities—even in the unlikely event that you could convince Hiigaran pilots to fly them. That's right, the Carriers are pretty much useless. If you're thinking of keeping them around for cannon fodder, think again. The Reactive Fleet tallies hull costs when it decides how much to throw against you; every piece of deadweight you drag along only strengthens the Vaygr. Enjoy the fireworks as you scuttle the Carriers (**ctrl** + **shift** + **S**).

TIP

Larger craft have multiple latch points to which Marine Frigates bind. Therefore, two Marine Frigates can simultaneously attack a Carrier. Using multiple boarding units speeds up the boarding process.

MISSION 04: GEHENNA OUTSKIRTS

Approaching the Gehenna system, you encounter the Vaygr perimeter defenses sprinkled throughout an asteroid field. Three Hyperspace Inhibitors limit your ability for strategic movement toward Gehenna. Before you can move forward, you must neutralize the defenses here, including the Command Station.

Mission Objectives

Primary

- Destroy the Hyperspace Inhibitors.
- Neutralize the Vaygr Command Station.

Secondary

- Capture a Hyperspace Gate.



Fig. 7-11. Mission 4 Sector Map

1–3: Hyperspace Inhibitor/Gate Positions

4: Vaygr Command Station

5: Vaygr Forward Resourcing Op



Mission Strategy **DESTROY THE OUTER** **DEFENSIVE PERIMETER**

This mission is the first real challenge to your abilities as a commander. You're faced with a varied array of Vaygr ship classes, and they start probing for tactical weaknesses. Without careful planning, you may experience significant attrition here, just when you're starting to build up a respectable armada.

Get your Resource Collectors busy on the resource zones to the Mothership's three and nine o'clock. Send a Platform Controller to each zone so that your Resource Collectors can avoid making long trips back and forth. Meanwhile, get your Mothership producing a mix of Torpedo Frigates and Gunships.

DESTROY THE OUTER **PERIMETER FLEET**

Your first goal is to capture one of the Hyperspace Gates. Reserve a couple of Flak Frigates and two Interceptor squadrons to provide a screen for your Mothership. Send your main force toward the Hyperspace Inhibitor at your Mothership's 10 o'clock, designated "Zone Alpha." Include your Carrier and Marine Frigates, but hold the Marine Frigates to the rear of the force. Vaygr units treat them as a high-priority target, so you need to clear a path for them.

Your first forces on point quickly take out a Minelayer Corvette. You then see that each Hyperspace Inhibitor is twinned with a Hyperspace Gate, through which reinforcements are arriving. Target one of these Gates with your Marine Frigates—soon. However, first knock down the local Vaygr forces.

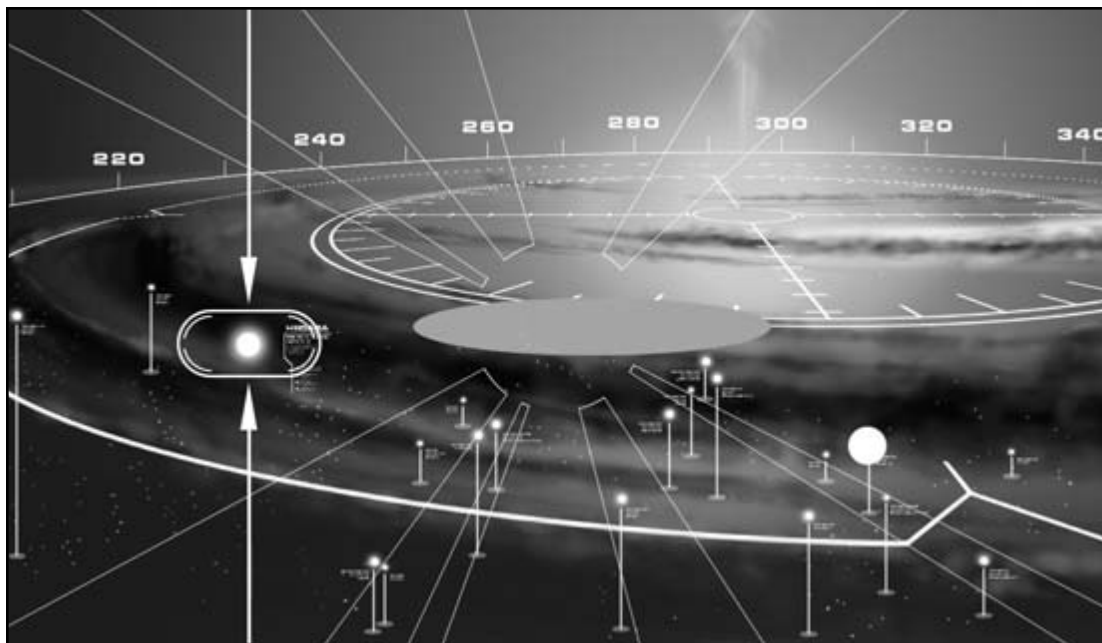
The Vaygr come at you with a mixed bag of ship classes: Bombers, Lance Fighters, and Missile Corvettes backed by Heavy Missile Frigates. Perform group attacks, being careful to dock or repair your units as they're weakened. Keep your forces on a short leash—you *don't* want them to accidentally destroy the first Hyperspace Gate.

TIP

Setting your ships' engagement mode to "Passive" [**F2**]

prevents them from selecting their own targets.

Meanwhile, you start to feel the Vaygr punching back for the first time. They send small detachments of Missile and Laser Corvettes to attack your Mothership and harass resourcing operations. These never become a significant threat, so don't let them distract you. Check your local force level occasionally, but focus on your main force.



When the area is relatively clear of Vaygr, send in the Marine Frigate to capture the Hyperspace Gate. Task a couple of Bombers to take out the Hyperspace Inhibitor here (you must zoom in on the asteroid to target the little rock warts). Meanwhile, repair any units that require it.

CLEAR THE ZONE

Before you move forward, search and destroy the Carrier near the middle Hyperspace Inhibitor. This prevents the Vaygr from sending in spoiling raids against you.

RAID ON VAYGR FORWARD RESOURCING OPS

This part of the mission is optional, but you have the chance to capture a Destroyer, so it's well worth doing. If you'd prefer to move ahead more quickly, just jump to the section marked "Destroy All Hyperspace Inhibitors."

Holding your Marine Frigates in reserve for the moment, send the rest of your main force through a Hyperspace Gate (they all lead to the same place). You end up in the middle-left of the Tactical Map, alongside three Vaygr Carriers, a Destroyer, and assorted screening vessels. Quickly take out the screen, then target one of the Carriers.

With the path clear, you can now bring through your Marine Frigates. Point them at the Destroyer (if you have some Marines in reserve, consider capturing a Carrier). Capture or annihilate the rest of the forces in the area, then dispatch a couple of Interceptor squadrons to take out the Heavy Missile Platforms in the nearby asteroid belt. You find a sizeable resourcing operation nearby; destroy it.

Capture one of the Hyperspace Gates on this side so that your force can jump back through.

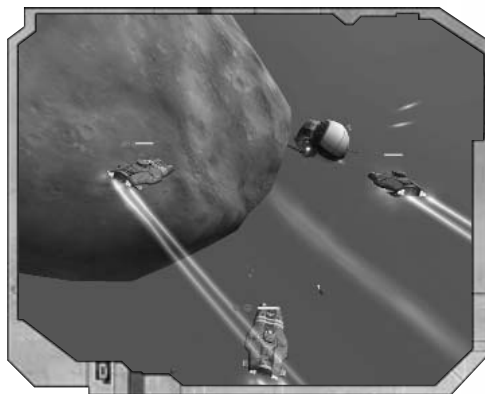


Fig. 7-12. Move in close to target the Hyperspace Inhibitors.

DESTROY ALL HYPERSPACE INHIBITORS

You've dealt with most of the outer perimeter defenses now and are ready to move forward. Before you do, set all of your units to "Passive Rules of Engagement" and have a readied force of at least eight Bomber squadrons. Do a research upgrade on your Bombers to increase their speed.

When you destroy the last Hyperspace Inhibitor, your entire fleet performs a tactical hyperspace jump forward, bringing you within range of the Vaygr Command Station.

CAPITAL MAYHEM

The Vaygr won't let the Command Station go down without a fight. Between you and your target is a flotilla of Frigates: Infiltration, Assault, and Heavy Missile variants. Fortunately, these ships are all relatively slow.

Let your main force hang back, but quickly send your speedy Bombers to the left of the Command Station. Here they find a Carrier busily performing repairs on the Command Station. Take the Carrier down with your Bombers, then target them on the Communications Array at the very bottom of the Command Station.



Fig. 7-13. Achieve strategic surprise by attacking the lower superstructure of the Command Station.

The Vaygr Frigate force moves forward to engage your main force. Don't fall for it; there's nothing to be gained from this battle. As soon as the Bombers take out the Command Station, the Vaygr units here are completely isolated. And you're long gone, carrying the fight to the Vaygr much, much closer to home.

ON TO THE NEXT MISSION

Missions 5–8 are full of surprises, advanced technology, and increasingly sneaky tactics. Turn to the next chapter to learn how to survive the onslaught.



CHAPTER 8: SINGLE-PLAYER MISSIONS 5-8

MISSION 05: GEHENNA

Having successfully destroyed the Command Station in Mission 4, you enter the Gehenna system undetected. Your goal now is to retrieve the Oracle. The Oracle holds secrets of the past and reveals them to help you get through the remainder of this saga.

Mission Objectives

Primary

- Retrieve the Oracle

Secondary

- Destroy Vaygr Garrisons
- Destroy Vaygr Shipyard

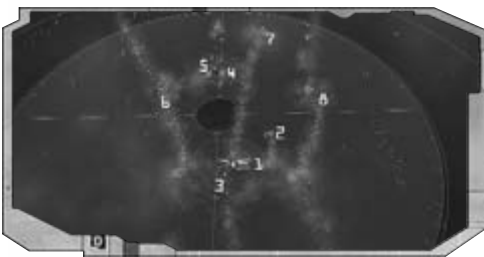


Fig. 8-1. Mission 5 Tactical Map

- 1: Initial Deployment
- 2: Resource Zone
- 3: Resource Zone
- 4: Oracle
- 5: Vaygr Main Fleet
- 6: Archer Field
- 7: Baker Field
- 8: Charlie Field

Mission Strategy

This mission is very much a “divide and conquer” level. There are strong Vaygr forces here, but if you play things right, you’ll take them on piecemeal rather than all at once.

Before you do *anything*, zoom out to the Sensors Manager view to get the lay of the land. Your fleet is located in a dust field. The boundaries of this dust field are indicated by brown lines on the ATI’s world-plane. The Vaygr can’t detect you as long as your ships are hidden inside the field. Stray outside, though, and you’ll have 40 seconds before the Vaygr are alerted (a warning is provided, but it doesn’t indicate the errant ship causing the warning). Once alerted, the Vaygr attack in a massive wave. They also start harvesting resources and building up a serious fleet. Avoid detection to successfully complete this mission. Fortunately, the Vaygr garrisons lack the ability to communicate in the field. You can destroy them without fear of being compromised.

TIP

Controlling the movement of your fleet in the dust field is much easier if you use Waypoints [W]. You can also set your fleet’s Tactical mode to passive. This prevents your ships from chasing stray Vaygr craft outside the field.

RESOURCE COLLECTION

There are two resource pockets near your Mothership: one at its seven o’clock, another at one o’clock. Be careful when you harvest from the second pocket. Ships moving to it often leave the dust field. Station a Mobile Refinery at this resource pocket to keep your Resource Collectors from betraying your presence.

Alternate Strategy



Fig. 8-2. Alternate Strategy: Full frontal assault

If you want to really test your mettle, attempt a bolder approach to this mission. Go after the Baker garrison with everything you've got, then do a quick dash down to the Oracle. As soon as you've docked your Marine Frigate with the Oracle, you have successfully completed the mission. This approach is very tricky, however. The Vaygr fleet starts building up as soon as you near the Oracle's position, and its targets of

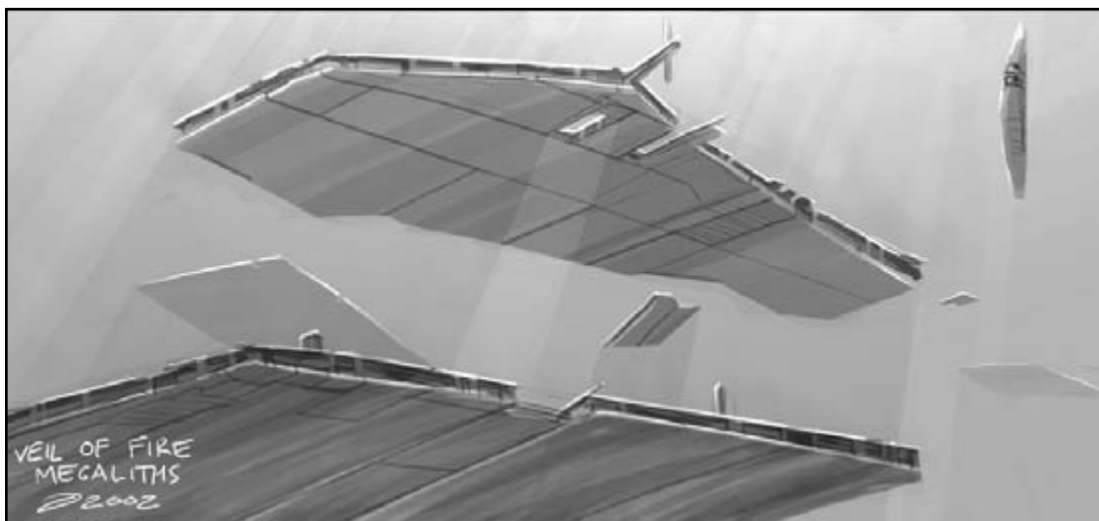
choice are your Marine Frigates (you need several to successfully complete this ploy). You also get only one try at it. The Vaygr forces quickly concentrate, leading to a battle of attrition that you can't win.



Fig. 8-3. Ships leaving the dust field are soon detected.

CHARLIE GARRISON

Of the three Vaygr fleets in this mission, the rightmost (Charlie) garrison is the weakest. Take it out first. If you're detected near Charlie garrison, the Vaygr attack from the Archer, and Baker garrisons will be slightly more strung out and easier to deal with.



Using Waypoints, send a detachment of Torpedo and Flak Frigates to the near end of Charlie field. Assign one or two Resource Collectors to repair duty on your Frigate taskforce. Research Improved Torpedoes if you haven't already done so. These do 1,520 damage vs. Frigates and Capital Ships (as opposed to 380 for the standard torpedoes). As soon as Ion Cannon Frigates become unlocked, start building these until you've reached your Frigate population cap. Improving your Frigate armor is also a good bet for this level.

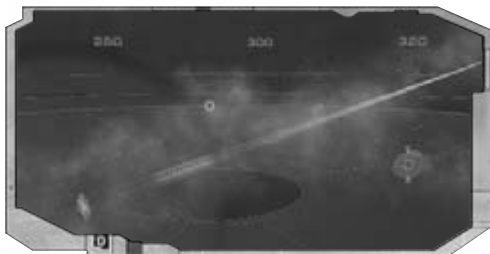


Fig. 8-4. Changing elevation while moving.

Advance toward Charlie garrison in a tight formation—the Capital Phalanx Strikegroup is great for this. Thanks to all the dust, you don't see the Vaygr fleet until you're almost on top of them. There is a Heavy Missile Platform here, as well as a wing or so of Assault Frigates and Lance Fighters. Your forces should easily obliterate them. Waypoint them back toward the Mothership and take on Baker garrison.

NOTE

Firing an Ion Cannon in a dust field ionizes the matter in the field, causing damage to every nearby ship. This effect looks like lightning and can be extremely perilous for Strikecraft. In this mission, the damage caused by ionization is pretty negligible. This is *not* the case in multiplayer maps.

BAKER GARRISON

The middle (Baker) arm of the dust field slopes gently upward, which can cause some problems

when you're trying to keep your fleet hidden. Fortunately, the ATI can help. Move using right-click, and your destinations automatically stay within the field, even if this requires an elevation change. Also try to move small groups of ships at a single time. Large fleets are more likely to stray outside the field as they jockey for position.

Baker garrison is a well-balanced force, consisting of Heavy Missile and Assault Frigates backed up by Corvettes and Fighters. You also find a Gun Platform or two (as always, the strength of the Vaygr fleet is dependent on your fleet's strength).



Fig. 8-5. Taking down a Weapons Platform at Baker field.

Bleed off the Vaygr Strikecraft with your own Fighters. Get them to chase you back to where your Flak Frigates await them. With these out of the way, go in with a heavy Anti-Frigate and Anti-Corvette force. If you captured the Destroyer in Mission 4, it comes in handy here. If not, include a good number of Ion Cannon Frigates in your force. Be extremely careful that your ships don't stray out of the narrow dust field. Chase them back in if they wander—the last thing you want is to deal with the combined wrath of several Vaygr garrisons.

ARCHER GARRISON

Once you've successfully dealt with Baker garrison, you're ready to deal with the Archer garrison and the Main Battle Fleet that lies beyond. Provide your Frigate force with a Pulsar Corvette screen, and dispatch it toward the bend in the rightmost

Archer field. You may encounter a small Vaygr Assault Craft patrol along the way—be careful, it can easily lure your ships out of the field's protective cover.

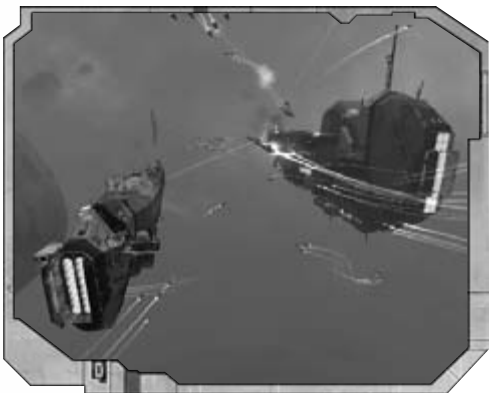


Fig. 8-6. Engaging the Vaygr Main Battle Fleet.

DESTROYING THE MAIN BATTLE FLEET

Once you've dealt with the garrison, start moving your Carriers up Archer field (when you build ships, you want them on station as soon as possible). Make sure you have the population limit for Ion Cannon or Torpedo Frigates. Gather your fleet at the point where the field widens, and take a deep breath—the upcoming battle is *huge*.

You take significant losses here and may have to regroup for a second attack wave. (If you hit them hard enough, the Vaygr won't pursue you. They will, however, continue building like mad.) The Vaygr force here is well balanced, consisting of a heavy Frigate contingent backed by Corvettes and Strikecraft. There's also a wall of Heavy Missile and Gun Platforms arrayed around the dig site. There are a few tactics you can use to minimize losses.



- Fill your build queues with Ion Cannon or Torpedo Frigates, Pulsar Gunships, and Bombers. When your fleet drops below the population cap, production immediately starts.
- Consider using a Defense Field Frigate or two to defend your Frigate force from the Vaygr Heavy Missiles.
- Use focused fire on the Vaygr Frigates to bring down their numbers. Take out the Heavy Missile Frigates first, then go after the Assault Frigates. Use the maximum firing range of your Frigates to reduce the amount of counterfire they take.
- Pull back your Strikecraft if they get into a mess with Assault Frigates or come within range of the platforms.
- Deal with the platforms after you've destroyed the bulk of the Vaygr forces. Your heavy-weapon Frigates outrange them, so you can attack with impunity.

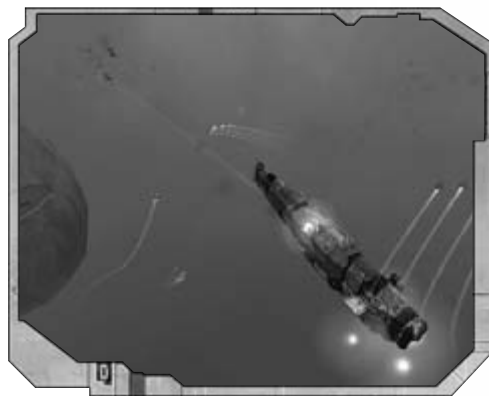


Fig. 8-7. Standoff attack on the Vaygr Carrier

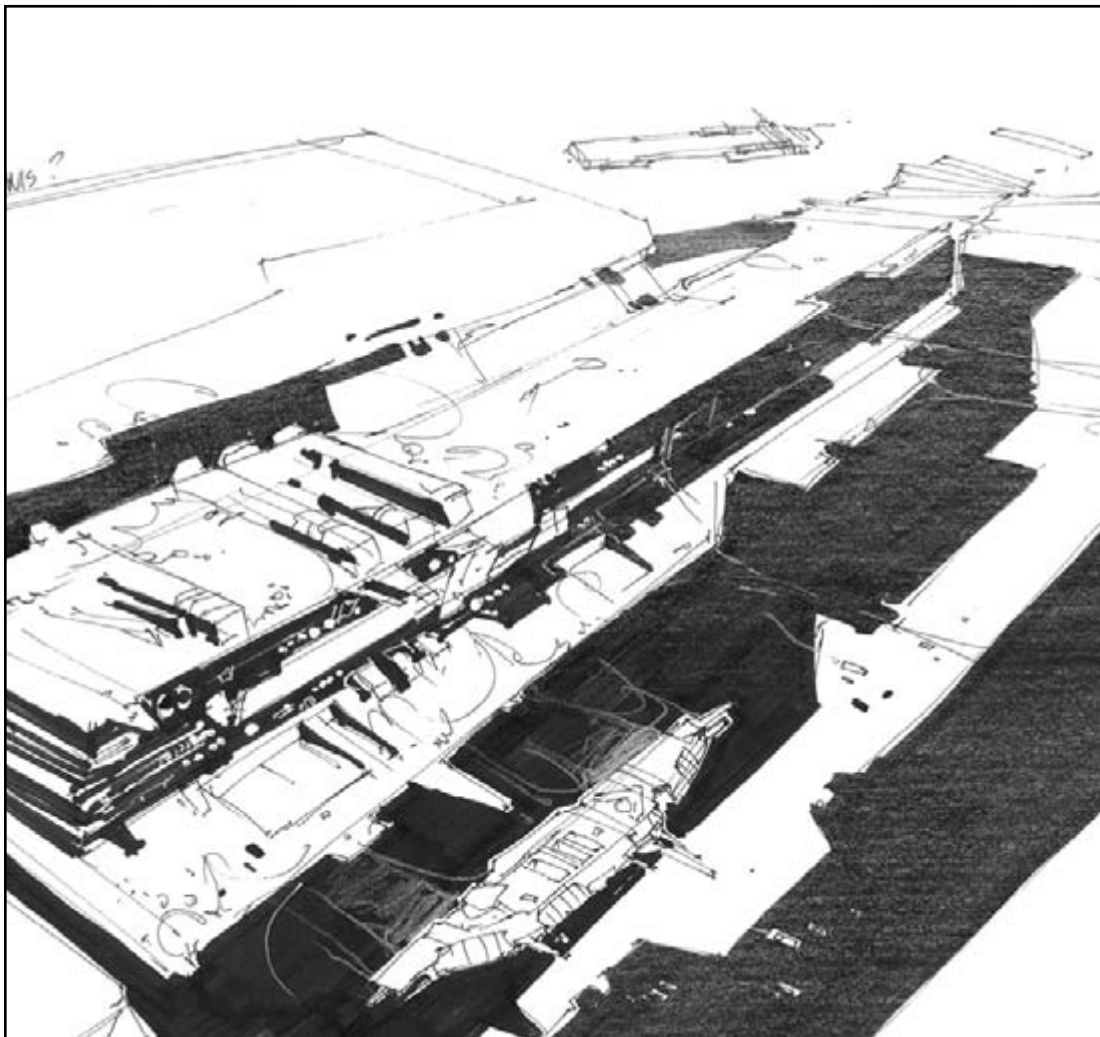
Once you feel the pressure easing, it's time to go after the Vaygr Production Facilities. Your Frigates are perfect for this task; Bombers are best assigned to take out subsystems. Besides the Shipyard, the Vaygr have a Carrier and a robust resourcing operation lurking near their resource pocket. Search and destroy. At the same time, command your Marine Frigates to dock with the Oracle dig site. They're the Vaygr's priority target, but you should be able to deal with the units straggling out of the Vaygr docks without too much difficulty.

Ch. 8: Single-Player Missions 5-8



You successfully complete the mission as soon as you dock a Marine Frigate with the Oracle dig site. Once the Oracle is returned and integrated with the Hyperspace Core, it immediately causes an anomaly. It seems the Oracle wants to guide you somewhere. To find out more, you must continue with Mission 6.

Fig. 8-8. Marine Frigates slip into position at dig site 603 while the battle rages.



MISSION 06: KARD'S GRAVEYARD

For unknown reasons, the Oracle has hyperspaced your fleet into a region filled with the ruined hulks of ancient ships. As the Oracle prepares for another jump, there is little to do but watch and wait—and build up your Frigate force.

Mission Objectives

- Begin Resourcing Operations
- Defend the Fleet
- Salvage the Derelict Ship
- Begin Anti-Mover Weapon Enhancement Research

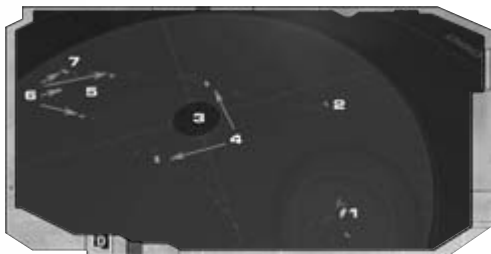


Fig. 8-9. Mission 6 Tactical Map

- 1: Initial Deploy Position
- 2: Mover Spawning Debris
- 3: Second Station
- 4: Mover Spawning Debris
- 5: Third Station
- 6: Mover Spawning Debris
- 7: Rendezvous Wreckage

Mission Strategy

This mission is often described as the most difficult to complete in the entire single-player campaign. If you go about it the wrong way, it is difficult *if not impossible* to prevail. With the right approach, however, it becomes much more manageable. This mission is a classic example of how to use a combined-arms approach to succeed where no single ship type could.

WHO CALLED THE MOVERS?

You encounter your first Progenitor ships here. Called Movers, these ships are Corvette-class vessels—the Progenitor equivalent of your Resource Collector. There is one significant difference between a Mover and a Resource Collector though: in one-on-one combat, a Mover can quickly destroy any Frigate you've got.

The mission begins with an eight-minute countdown as the Hyperspace Core charges for a jump. Immediately begin building Ion Cannon and Torpedo Frigates, as well as Interceptors.

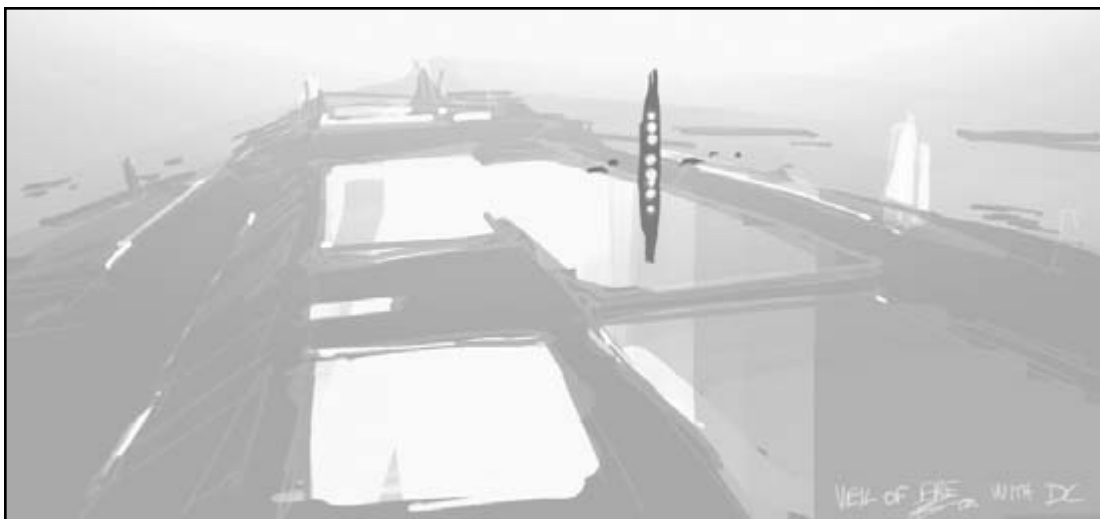
Retire any Marine or Flak Frigates to maximize the number of heavy-weapon ships you can field. Get your Resource Collectors working the nearby resource pocket. They'll be left alone if you handle everything else correctly. Researching a hull upgrade for your Mothership is also highly advisable, as she can take quite a beating here.



Fig. 8-10. Combined force attack against the Mover wave

Very shortly, you receive a message about signals emanating from nearby ship debris—Movers. Position your Frigates in a Capital Phalanx Strikegroup to bring them into a tight formation, and bring up your Interceptor screen.

You can exploit a weakness in the Mover targeting sequence to help you survive this level. Although the Movers can cut through Frigates with ease, they'd much rather attack Strikecraft. Fortunately, they're not all that effective against Strikecraft. With the Interceptor screen distracting the Movers, you can use focused fire to quickly reduce their numbers. It's



imperative that you destroy this first wave before reinforcements arrive; otherwise, your fleet will quickly be reduced to rubble.

Subsequent waves of three or four Movers appear one after another. Your goal now should be to prevent their numbers from increasing. Continue to direct your Frigates with focused fire while the hyperspace countdown continues.

HARVESTING

If you don't come into this mission with a healthy sum of RUs, it's easy to go broke building Interceptor squadrons to replace the ones the Movers destroy. As soon as the first resource pocket is exhausted, send your Resource Collectors and a Mobile Refinery to the resource pocket near the map's center. Once you've exhausted this, there's another resource zone near the Mothership's third station. The Movers put a low priority on Resource Collectors—as long as there are Strikecraft around to pursue.

TIP

Another trick to use in this mission is to dock your Strikecraft with the Carrier using the Launch Manager, then set the Carrier to "Stay Docked." This protects your Strikecraft from fire while the Capital Ships duke it out with the Movers.



Fig. 8-11. Movers seriously damage the Mothership in very little time.

SECOND STATION

Once the countdown reaches zero, the Oracle jumps the Mothership to the very center of the Tactical Map, where it begins a nine-minute-plus countdown to a second jump. The Mover attacks on your Frigate force immediately dry up when this happens. Reposition your Frigate force toward the map's center. It's important that you get your Strikecraft on station as soon as possible. Movers start attacking the Mothership, and she's in no position to defend herself.



Fig. 8-12. *More Movers emerge from their hiding places.*

You don't face a massive attack wave here, but it can be easy to fall behind. Mover numbers quickly add up. Continue to use focused fire, and don't let your Strikecraft wander too far from the Frigates as you run down the clock.

THE TIPPING POINT

Soon after the Mothership is repositioned, you receive a message about a disabled Mover that's been located. Retrieve this immediately—it helps *immensely* against the Movers. Dispatch two Resource Collectors to retrieve it, along with an escort of three Interceptors to distract the Movers, which are guarding their fallen comrade.



Fig. 8-13. *Retrieving the disabled Mover*

A few seconds after your Resource Collectors return the damaged Mover to the Mothership, new research becomes available (it appears as "Anti-Mover Weaponry" under the Capital research menu as Mothership-related research). Start researching immediately.

The Anti-Mover tech effectively reduces the Mover hull points by 80 percent, making them much easier to destroy. It's a good thing too, since they start coming in fast and furious now.

THIRD STATION

With the second jump, it becomes apparent that the Oracle is zeroing in on a location of some unknown significance. It appears that you are nearing this location, as the Mothership begins moving toward a derelict hulk at hull speed.

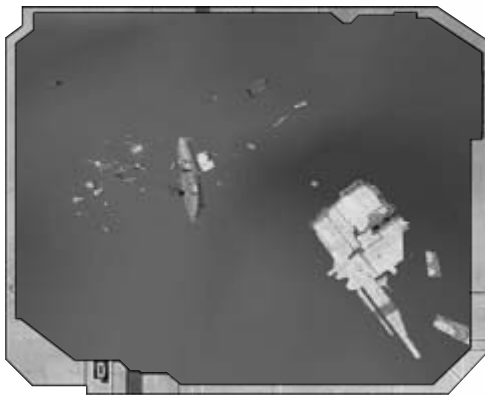


Fig. 8-14. *The Oracle brings the wreckage back online.*

The third station is literally surrounded with Mover-spawning debris. Movers immediately set upon the Mothership. Bring your Interceptor/Frigate force up to engage. If the Mothership starts taking serious damage, assign your Resource Collectors to perform repairs. With the increased effectiveness of your weapons, focusing fire on a single Mover becomes overkill. Break your Frigates up into attack groups of four or five, and set up a killing field around your Mothership.

The mission is successfully completed as soon as your Mothership approaches the still-functioning derelict. After exchanging messages with the Oracle, the ruined ship transmits a message that deactivates the Movers. It seems the Oracle and Progenitors might not be so hostile after all. The Oracle releases control of the Hyperspace Core as you're provided with the location of a Progenitor relic. Your fleet enters hyperspace to investigate this discovery.

MISSION 07: PROGENITOR FOUNDRY

Your quest to find the Progenitor Dreadnaught is interrupted by quantum distortions, which pull your fleet out of hyperspace. You emerge to find yourself surrounded by radiation-emitting debris. It is this debris that has aborted your jump. In order to continue, you must destroy it all.

Mission Objectives

- Investigate Derelict Hulks
- Build Movers to Clear Debris
- Clear Debris
- Destroy Vaygr Forces

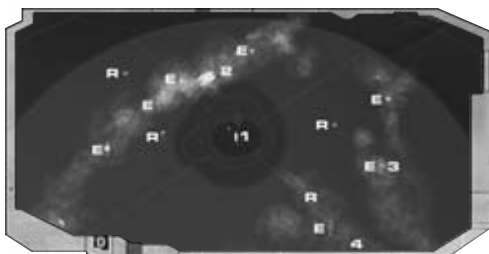


Fig. 8-15. Mission 7 Tactical Map

- 1: Initial Deploy Position
- 2: Point Alpha
- 3: Point Bravo
- 4: Point Charlie
- R: Resource Pockets
- E: Radiation-Emitting Debris

Mission Strategy

This Mission plays out like the classic “Ambush in the Gulch” scenario of western lore. In this case, the walls of the “gulch” are formed by the radiation-spewing debris. This radiation is powerful enough to quickly destroy your largest ships of the line, so it effectively limits your fleet’s freedom of movement (the radiation’s “line of death” is displayed as a series of brown circles on the ATI’s world-plane). The role of the “bandits” is played here by several radiation-hardened Vaygr taskforces, along with Progenitor Movers.

Timing is the key to success in this mission. If you move too aggressively, you’ll end up chasing your foes into the radiation cloud, experiencing heavy losses as a result. If you move too slowly, the Vaygr forces will start hitting you from all sides. Left without any safe resourcing operations, your forces will quickly suffer attrition. Fortunately, you don’t have to let this happen.

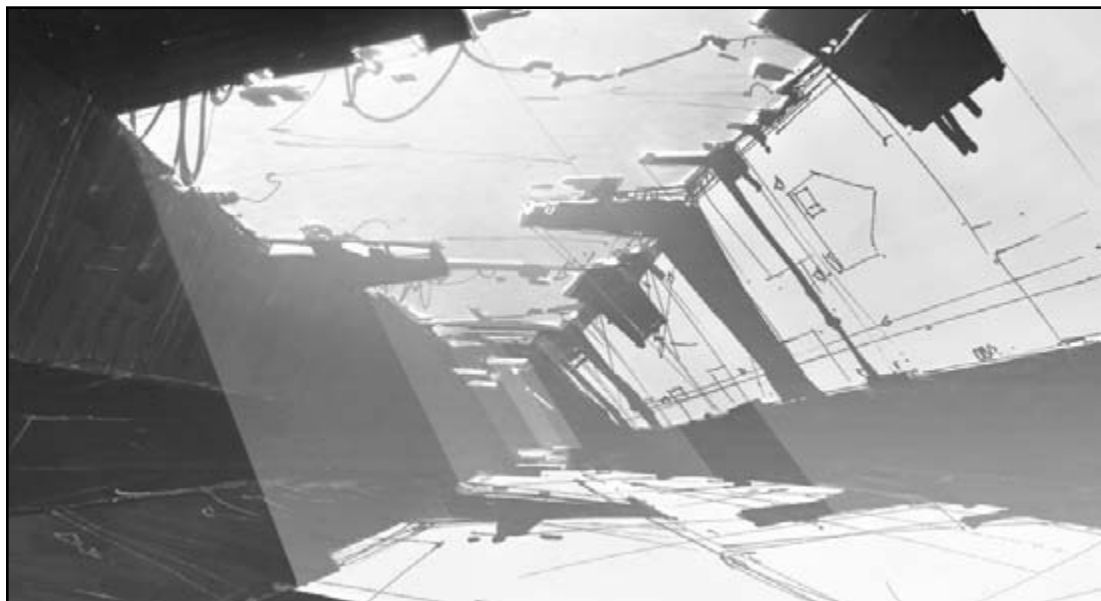




Fig. 8-16. Salvaging debris can be a lucrative effort.

EXPLORING THE DEBRIS

As the Mission starts, you're instructed to send a Probe to explore the debris. The deployment of the Probe triggers events, so if you don't have a strong Anti-Capital force (two Destroyers and a strong contingent of improved Torpedo Frigates and Ion Frigates will suffice), start harvesting and building up before you dispatch it.

Your Probe detects the Progenitor Movers lurking near the debris, and this unlocks your ability to build Movers of your own. Build a Mover Facility, then immediately queue up 10 of these ships. If you don't already have a Defense Field Frigate, build one and assign it to guard your Frigate force.



Fig. 8-17. The first friendly Mover leaves the launch bay.

RESOURCING

There are two resource pockets available to you at the start of the mission. Others exist, but they require you to clear some debris before you can move in your Resource Collectors.

The resource pocket at your Mothership's seven o'clock is relatively safe. Deploy at least half your available Resource Collectors here. Another pocket is off your Mothership's one o'clock position. This area is a little more contentious, as a Vaygr taskforce eventually positions itself nearby. If you decide to harvest this pocket, watch for the taskforce's arrival so that you can pull back.

DESTROYING THE PROBE

You receive an alert announcing the arrival of a Vaygr Probe. Dispatch a single Interceptor squadron to destroy it. Although it's impossible to prevent the Vaygr from finding you here, the Probe's destruction delays their arrival by a couple of minutes.

DESTROYING THE DEBRIS

An Intel Event instructs you to use Movers to destroy the debris. Movers are immune to the radiation, and they're also very proficient at destroying debris—at least 10 times more effective than any other ship you can field.

TIP

Movers have their own population cap, so they don't affect your ability to field other types of ships. Always keep a maximum number of Movers on hand; they're a very effective Corvette-class ship.

As soon as you've built six Movers, you can start clearing the debris, leveling the playing field for the rest of the mission. Locate the resource pocket to your Mothership's three o'clock. Assign a control group to your Movers and order them to attack the nearby debris. Keep an eye on them though. As they come within sensor range, you find three Movers on guard duty, futilely attempting to rebuild the Progenitor ship from its wreckage. Use focused fire to quickly take down the Movers.

TIP

While there are many pieces of debris on this map, the only ones you *must* take down are the seven large hulks indicated by a “ping” icon on your Sensors Manager. Three Progenitor Movers guard each of these hulks.

Once you've constructed some additional Movers, send a single ship to clear the debris at your Mothership's four and five o'clock. There are no Progenitor ships guarding these hulks, so a single ship is sufficient. Assign the rest of your Movers to take out the hulks at your Mothership's two o'clock position. There are three Movers here, so use focused fire and superior numbers to swing the battle and avoid losses. As soon as you've cleared the field here, start clearing the debris off your Mothership's eleven o'clock—only go after the smaller, “non-pinging” debris for now.



Fig. 8-18. The Vaygr Alpha taskforce

ENTER THE VAYGR

An Intel Event now announces that the first Vaygr taskforce has arrived. Backed by a Carrier and Destroyers, this taskforce takes up a position near the spot marked “Point Alpha” on the Tactical Map and assumes an aggressive posture. Ignore the taskforce for now. If you attempt to engage, it'll just pull your forces into the radiation. Instead, let the enemy come to you.

The computer opponent in this mission is extremely aggressive, almost foolishly so. If you let

it build up, this becomes a problem, as you'll be facing continuous attacks from all sides. By selectively placing your blows, however, you can beat the Vaygr back before they get a chance to overwhelm you. In this situation, their aggressiveness only serves to leave their core assets undefended, giving you opportunities to inflict the final blows.

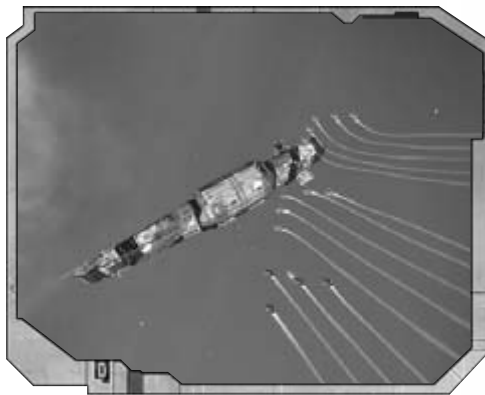


Fig. 8-19. A Carrier without an escort is just scrap waiting to happen.

HOLDING GROUND AGAINST ALPHA TASKFORCE

The Vaygr Alpha taskforce starts streaming in for the attack on your Main Battle Fleet. The attack consists of Destroyers and Frigates, supported by a small Strikecraft contingent. Use Interceptors and Pulsar Gunships to deal with the Strikecraft threat. Put your Anti-Capital force into a Capital Phalanx formation, and rain focused fire down on the Vaygr Frigates and Destroyers. Use your Defense Field Frigate to reduce the effects of the Vaygr Destroyers.

With this taskforce destroyed, the Vaygr Carrier at Point Alpha is completely undefended. If you have the resources for it, you can defeat this taskforce now. Send in your Movers on an anti-radiation mission, then bring in some Bombers to take down the Carrier. Only do this if you have enough ships to simultaneously engage the second Vaygr taskforce. It can be beneficial to let this taskforce survive for a while, however. The Vaygr attack any Progenitor Movers they encounter, which means less work for you down the road.

TIP

When your ships destroy debris on this mission, they actually just break it down into smaller, nonradioactive pieces. Your Resource Collectors can harvest this scrap. Although the travel distances are greater, Resource Collectors don't mine scrap—they just grab a piece and head for the Mothership.

Some of the scrap pieces are worth over 1,000 RUs each, so this can be a very lucrative endeavor.

COUNTERATTACK AT POINT BRAVO

The second Vaygr fleet appears at "Point Bravo" on your Tactical Map. This is the smallest of the three taskforces, but it still has at least one Destroyer and a Carrier. As soon as you've eliminated the Strikecraft threat from Alpha taskforce, run your own Strikecraft to the resource pocket at Point Bravo to provide some point defense. Reinforce them with your Anti-Capital force as soon as they've cleared the rest of the Vaygr Alpha assault. With the debris cleared from this area, the Vaygr's primary advantage is lost. By fielding superior numbers against them, you should achieve local superiority at minimal cost. Make certain that you destroy the Vaygr Carrier

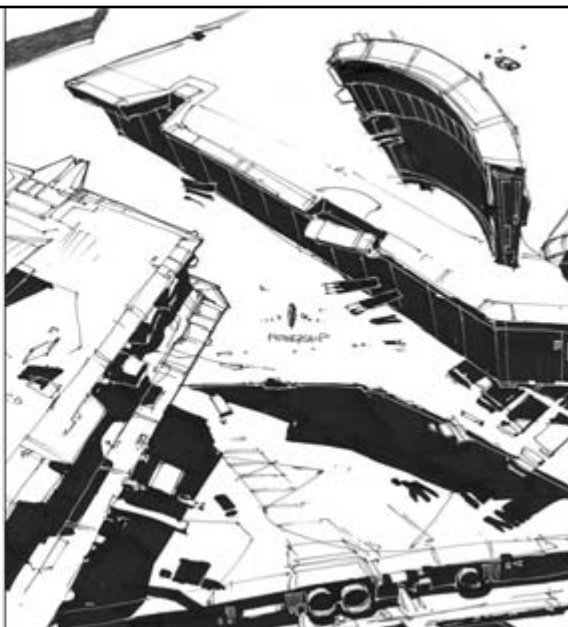
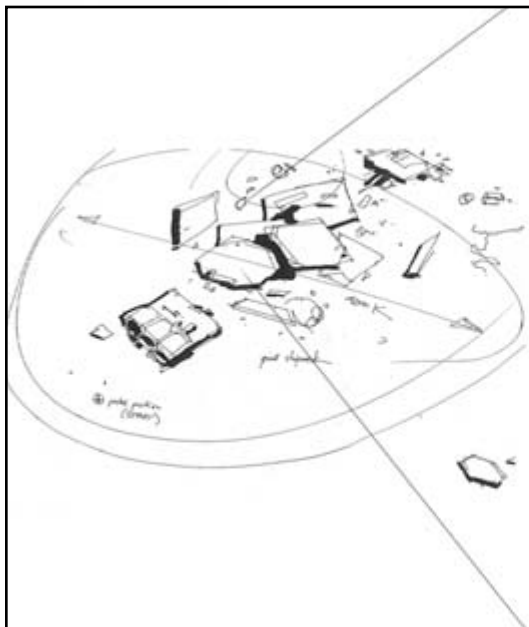
lurking nearby, or you'll soon be facing another wave of bogeys from this point. If you're not already doing so, you can now safely start harvesting from the resource pocket near Point Bravo.

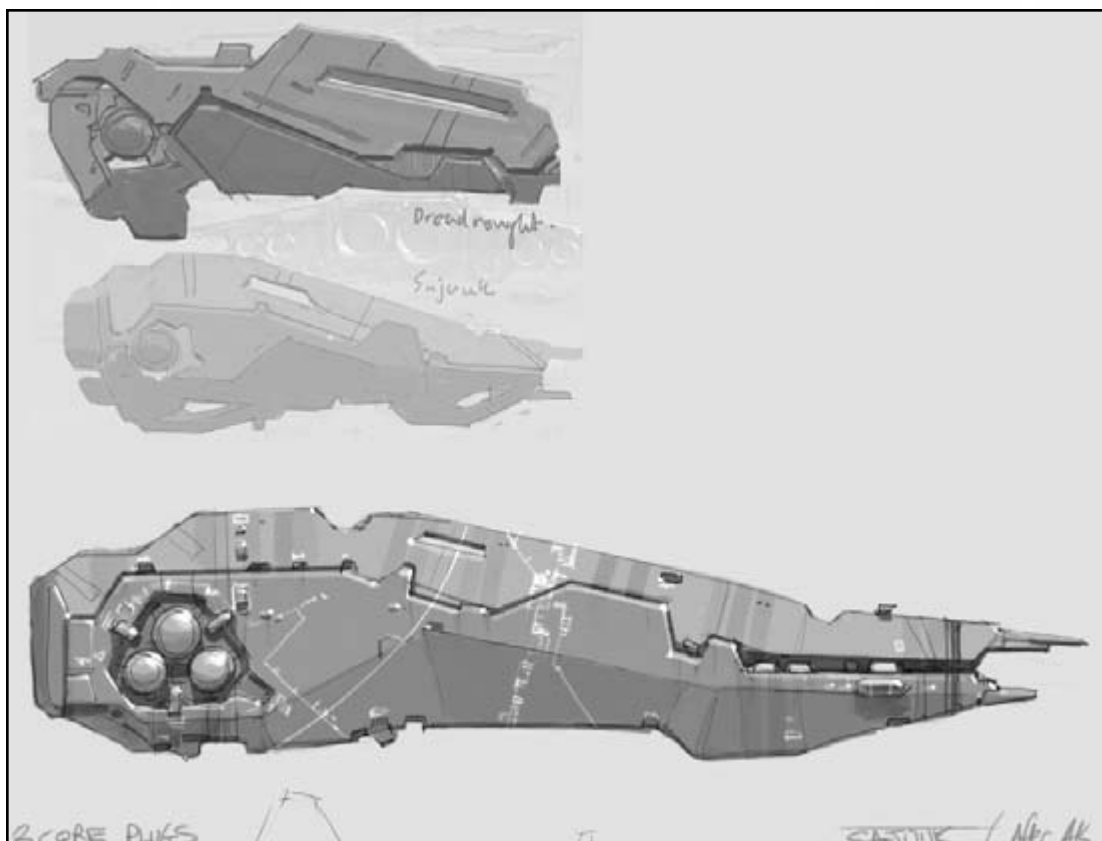


Fig. B-20. The Shipyard at Point Charlie doesn't have a chance.

THE SWEEP INTO CHARLIE

Before you've cleared the field at Point Bravo, you see Vaygr Strikecraft coming in from Point Charlie. These are the lead elements of the third and final Vaygr taskforce. Once again, the Vaygr fleet commander is committing forces to battle without regard for force composition or fleet integrity. Learn from this.





TIP

Keep your ship-building queues full to replace your losses.

You don't have to move the replacement ships to join your combat fleet. They provide a handy defensive screen for your Mothership in case the Vaygr from Point Alpha launch a second attack.

While your Strikecraft clean up the Vaygr fighters, swing your Capital Ships toward Point Charlie. You encounter Frigates steaming toward you. With their escort strung out ahead of them, they easily fall to your Anti-Capital force.

The final line of defense from Charlie taskforce is a Destroyer. Oblivious to the fact that its escort has been annihilated, the Destroyer continues on the warpath toward you. It makes an easy target for either your Bombers or your Frigates.



Fig. 8-21. Another lone Capital Ship suffers its final blows.

A DELICATE BALANCE

The timing at this point of the mission is very delicate. If you haven't taken out the Alpha Carrier yet, it will have rebuilt a Frigate force by now. This force moves forward slightly, trying to

lure you toward a fiery death in the radiation clouds. Once it's built up its strength to seven Frigates, it launches a spoiling attack against you. Anticipate this move so that you're not fighting two battles at once.

Continue your sweep toward Point Charlie. By the time you get on station, you've cleared all the local Vaygr forces and come within sensor range of a Vaygr Shipyard sitting alone in the dark. This Shipyard has the only Vaygr Capital Facility, so its destruction represents the real tipping point in this battle. This also secures the resource pocket at your Mothership's three o'clock position. Clear out any Vaygr Resource Collectors still wandering around.

TIP

The CPU automatically harvests all available resources for you at every mission's end. It does not, however, recognize the debris as an RU source until you've broken it down to salvageable chunks. To maximize your resource collection from this mission, destroy all the smaller debris pieces *before* you destroy all of the radiation-emitting ones, since this triggers the end of the mission.



Fig. 8-22. The final engagement at Point Alpha.

RETURN TO POINT ALPHA

While you've been busy with the other two taskforces, the Carrier at Point Alpha has been rebuilding a Frigate taskforce. Yes, the Vaygr still want to play. This time, though, it's your turn to deal.

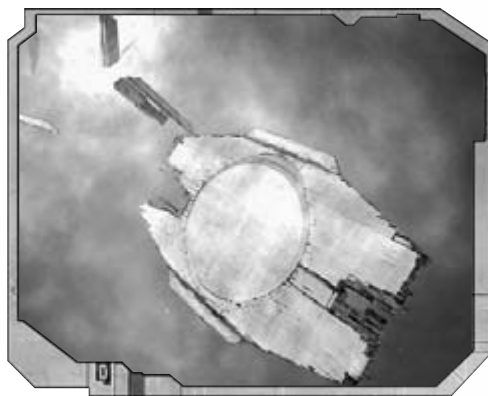


Fig. 8-23. This piece of debris is the only indestructible one on the map.

Bring your Main Battle Fleet back toward the Mothership and hold it there. If you haven't already done so, bring your Movers in to clear the debris at Point Alpha. This catches the attention of the Vaygr Frigates, and you may suffer slight losses. Pull your Movers out as soon as the Vaygr Carrier is exposed. It's time for the takedown.

Move your entire Main Battle Fleet toward Point Alpha now, engaging the Vaygr Frigates with concentrated fire as they come within range. The only Vaygr force on the map is the Carrier at Point Alpha. Obliterate it.

CLEARING THE MAP

Your work still isn't over—not until you clear all the radiation-emitting debris. Rebuild your Mover force until you have the maximum number of 10 ships, and always use focused fire on the Progenitor defenders. Since they're Corvette-class vessels, Movers can dock with Capital Ships for repairs.

As soon as you've destroyed the last of the seven "pinging" pieces of debris, your fleet's hyperspace ability is restored. You immediately make the jump to find the Progenitor Dreadnaught.

MISSION 08: DREADNAUGHT BERTH

If an invulnerable enemy has ever sniped you, then you know how infuriating it is. If not, you get a taste of that experience in this mission. There's really only one enemy ship to worry about here, but that doesn't make it any less tense.

Mission Objectives

- Confirm Dreadnaught's Location
- Retrieve Dreadnaught Using Movers
- Protect the Fleet
- Send Probes to Locate Trigger Devices
- Use Movers to Collect the Triggers

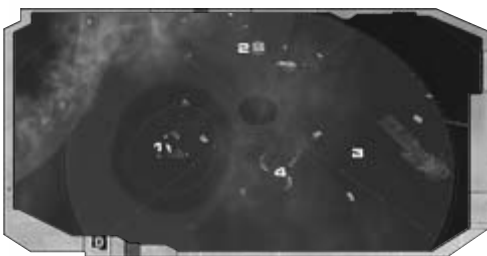


Fig. 8-24. Mission 8 Tactical Map

- 1: Initial Deploy Position
- 2: Dreadnaught Berth
- 3: Trigger Devices
- 4: Progenitor Power Module

Mission Strategy

To successfully complete this mission, you need 10 Movers and a Defense Frigate or two. A strong Anti-Corvette contingent is also handy—build Pulsar Corvettes and Torpedo Frigates for this role. Assign a control group to your Movers, and set the Defense Field Frigate to guard your Capital Ships.

INVESTIGATING THE WRECKAGE

As the mission starts, you're instructed to send a Probe toward a piece of wreckage. You can do this, or move your Mothership there instead. It takes the Mothership longer to make the trip, but this may save you a Capital Ship or two later in the mission.

The wreckage has a guardian. As soon as any of your ships enter its sensor range, this guardian—a Progenitor "Keeper" ship—awakens.



Fig. 8-25. The Keeper understands.

The Keeper immediately starts spawning Attack Drones. The Drones take up a patrol position around the Dreadnaught, arranging themselves to repel all interlopers. Order your Movers to dock with the Dreadnaught, and move up your Anti-Corvette force to provide some screening against the Drones.

RESOURCING

This mission is pretty sparse on the resource side of things. While there are several small resource pockets scattered throughout the map, this can be a distraction from the main focus of the mission. If at all possible, let the CPU automatically get these resources at the mission's end. This also frees up your Resource Collectors to perform repairs when the Keeper strikes.

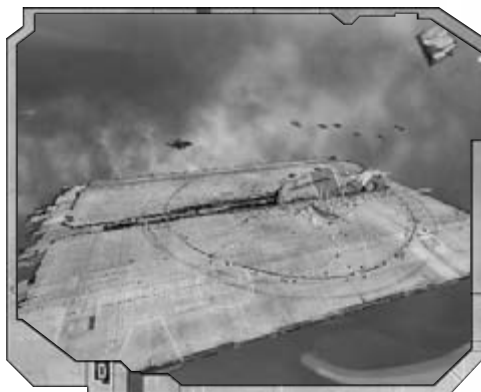
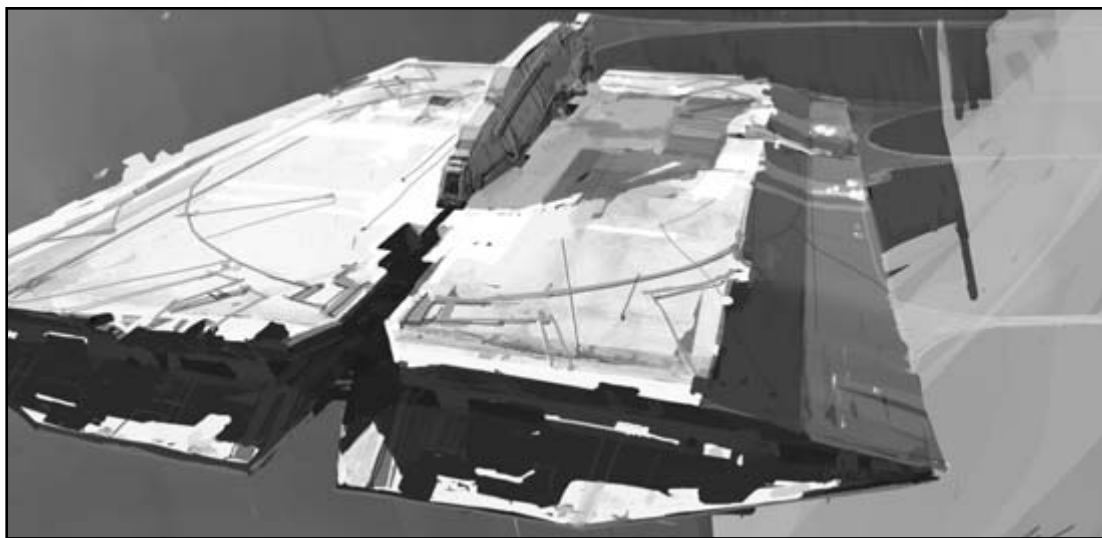


Fig. 8-26. Movers position to get the Dreadnaught underway.



TOWING THE DREADNAUGHT

It takes six Movers to tow the Dreadnaught. As your ships move into place, the reserve force of four Movers goes along with them. The Drones immediately start taking potshots at the Movers—their highest-priority target. Keep an eye on this. If a Mover is destroyed while the tow is underway, the Dreadnaught stops moving. Order one of your reserve Movers to replace the fallen ship.

Slowly but surely, the Dreadnaught makes its way to dock with the Mothership. Be careful that there's no debris near the Mothership's starboard side, as this can interfere with the docking. And just about now, when everything is going right, you first experience the full extent of the Keeper's wrath.



Fig. 8-27. The Dreadnaught is positioned for docking.

ENGAGING THE KEEPER

The Keeper is a strange and horrible ship to encounter in combat. It packs an offensive punch roughly equivalent to a Battlecruiser and is almost completely impervious to damage. Sustained fire from a heavy-bore Anti-Capital fleet barely dents the thing. Even if you *could* critically wound it, delivering the coup de grace is impossible. The Keeper just vanishes into another dimension, only to return moments later, fully repaired.

Fortunately, the Keeper's attitude toward combat is just as unusual as every other aspect of the ship. It targets Destroyers first, then Carriers, then your Mothership. Once it destroys a single ship—or has drained its own weapons—it “winks out” for a brief period of time. It then tends to its brood of Attack Drones, replacing any losses you may have inflicted on them. You never lose your entire fleet to the Keeper, but it can diminish your Capital forces if given a chance.

A single attack from the Keeper is enough to destroy anything smaller than a Mothership. Assign Resource Collectors to perform repairs while you bring a Defense Field Frigate into play. There's little more that you can do, other than just harden yourself for the attack.

TIP

Another way to deal with the Keeper is to use a massive EMP attack. You need a full complement of 14 Scout squadrons to accomplish this, as well as some expensive research, but the Keeper *can* be temporarily disabled by such an attack. Unfortunately, Marine Frigates refuse to attempt a boarding action, so capture is impossible.

TRAPPING THE KEEPER

As soon as the Dreadnaught has docked with the Mothership, send your Movers to the position marked "Trigger Devices" on the Tactical Map. If you've cleared the skies of Attack Drones, move your Anti-Corvette force to the near side of the Power Module. Once your researchers have analyzed the Dreadnaught, you're notified that your engineers have discovered a way to disable the Keeper. By activating the Progenitor Power Module with three Triggers, you can "overload" the Keeper. Build a Probe and send it to where your Movers await. (Ships' sensors aren't rigged to identify the Triggers).

Assign three Movers to retrieve each Trigger. Only one is required to actually tow the device, but the two reserves are handy if the Drones manage to inflict losses. The Movers automatically start dragging the Triggers toward the Progenitor Power Module.

CONCLUSION

You've now completed the first half of the single-player campaign. Armed with the Progenitor Dreadnaught, your fleet is ready to deal with just about anything the Vaygr can throw at you. It is now time to take the battle to Makaan. In the next chapter, we'll take you through the gauntlet.

Of course, the Keeper doesn't sit still while this goes on. It now winks in at the center of the Power Module, releasing a double helping of Attack Drones to intercept your Movers. Engage the Drones with your Anti-Corvette force. You may suffer the loss of a Mover or two, but the reserves should immediately resume the task.

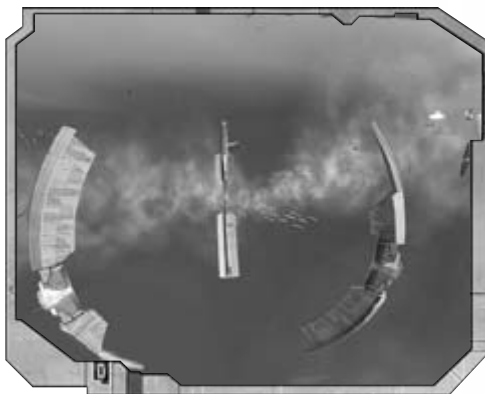


Fig. 8-28. The Power Module is activated.

As soon as all three Triggers are in place, the Power Module sparks into life. The Keeper is immediately trapped, and you've successfully completed the mission. Sensor readings indicate that the Keeper will soon explode, so the fleet performs an immediate hyperspace jump. You now have a Progenitor Dreadnaught as part of your fleet.

CHAPTER 9: SINGLE-PLAYER MISSIONS 9-12

Mission 09: COUNTERATTACK

Captain Soban manages to communicate the position of the Vaygr Main Battle Fleet. Armed with the incredible firepower of the Progenitor Dreadnaught, your fleet hyperspaces in to join the fray. Before you can deliver the decisive blow, however, the Dreadnaught's main weapon—a Phased Cannon Array of immense destructive power—suffers a misfire, severely damaging the crown jewel of your fleet.

Mission Objectives

- **Defend the Dreadnaught.**
- **Bring the Dreadnaught's engines back online.**

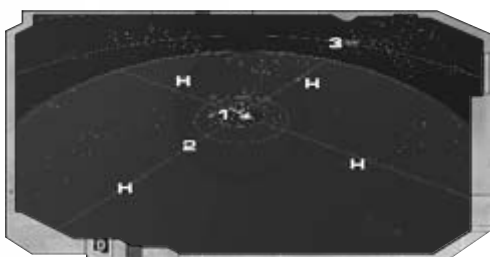


Fig. 9-1. Mission 9 Tactical Map

- 1: Initial Deploy Position
- 2: Nabaal Shipyard
- 3: Vaygr Shipyard
- H: Vaygr Hyperspace Gates

Mission Strategy

Take a deep breath before you begin this mission because you probably won't have time later. To succeed here, you must survive multiple assault waves inbound from all points of the horizon. As if that weren't bad enough, you also have to tangle with multiple taskforces. These hyperspace in almost *on top* of your position.

Your biggest danger is letting your fleet become strung out. You don't have sufficient forces to dominate much more than a single point on the map, so chasing the enemy results in a loss of local superiority and quickly stretches your resources to the breaking point. Instead, focus on developing local superiority within the small space you *can* control.

RESOURCING

The safest resource pocket on the map is located at your Mothership's six o'clock, angels-high. There's another one located at 12 o'clock, devils-low.



Fig. 9-2. The Dreadnaught lists helplessly.

SAVING THE DREADNAUGHT

The Dreadnaught begins this mission as a helpless cripple, with both engines and weapons disabled.

Immediately send in six Resource Collectors to perform initial repairs so that she can move under her own power. You must also eliminate the immediate threat posed by the Vaygr Destroyers and Frigates off your Mothership's bow. Once again, assign a control group to your Frigates, and lay down the focused fire with a vengeance. Consider building a Defense Field Frigate or two to protect your Capital Ship formations. You should also build a Fire Control Module on your Mothership. The fur balls are on their way.

NOTE

Fire Control Towers create a Sphere of Effect.

Within this sphere, friendly ships receive a 15-percent bonus in their ability to hit their targets, as well as in the amount of damage inflicted. Two towers with overlapping spheres provide *double* the bonus. This gives you a 30% increase in the amount of damage each of your ships inflicts. [Thirty percent is the maximum possible bonus—further Fire Control Towers do nothing].

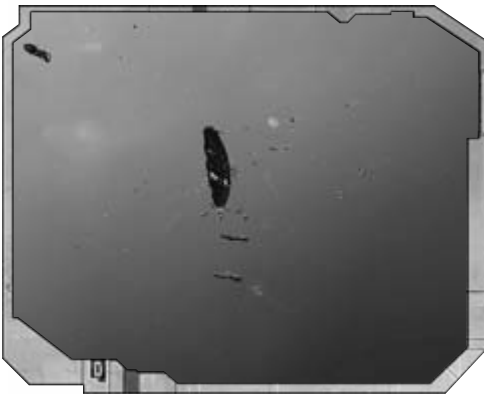


Fig. 9-3. Fight near the Mothership once you've built the Fire Control Tower.

COMPLETING REPAIRS

Once your Resource Collectors have brought the Dreadnaught's engines online, further repairs require the use of a Shipyard. An Intel Event announces that one is on its way.

Move the Dreadnaught toward your Mothership's six o'clock—this is where the Shipyard appears. Bring your entire Anti-Capital force along as well, since you're not the only one who will notice the Shipyard's arrival. Meanwhile, create two mixed control groups of Bombers and Movers. Move these to your Mothership's twelve and three o'clock positions, just on the edge of your Mothership's sensors range.

Since you're right in the middle of the Vaygr positioning area, Vaygr craft start streaming in from every direction. For the most part, these are easily handled with "onesies and twosies," but the pacing can quickly become daunting if you allow their numbers to build up. A strong mixed Corvette detachment can help you quickly get on point to deal with these.



Fig. 9-4. Victory is born of many small successes.

TIP

Because you're facing attacks from all sides, it's helpful to extend your sensors' range so you can get the appropriate defensive lines into position. A great and cheap way to do this is to dispatch Probes. Don't send these very far—just to the edge of your Mothership's sensor range is sufficient. [Sending them out farther only increases the likelihood of the Vaygr destroying them, and besides, you can't respond to distant threats anyway.]

SURROUNDED BY HYPERSPACE GATES

Four Vaygr Hyperspace Gates now move into position near your Mothership and station themselves at all four points of the compass. With your Bomber/Mover forces, quickly take down the gates at your twelve and three o'clock positions. Small numbers of Vaygr Strikecraft quickly come through the gates. Deal with them using your local forces wherever possible.

NOTE

There's a Vaygr Shipyard near the resource

pocket located about 38 clicks off your Mothership's starboard bow, angels-high. If you leave it alone, it will continuously churn out Destroyers while serving as the drop-off point for a resourcing op.

The Shipyard is quite a ways off, so engaging it may stretch your forces somewhat. But if you want to go on the offensive for once, this is the place to do it.

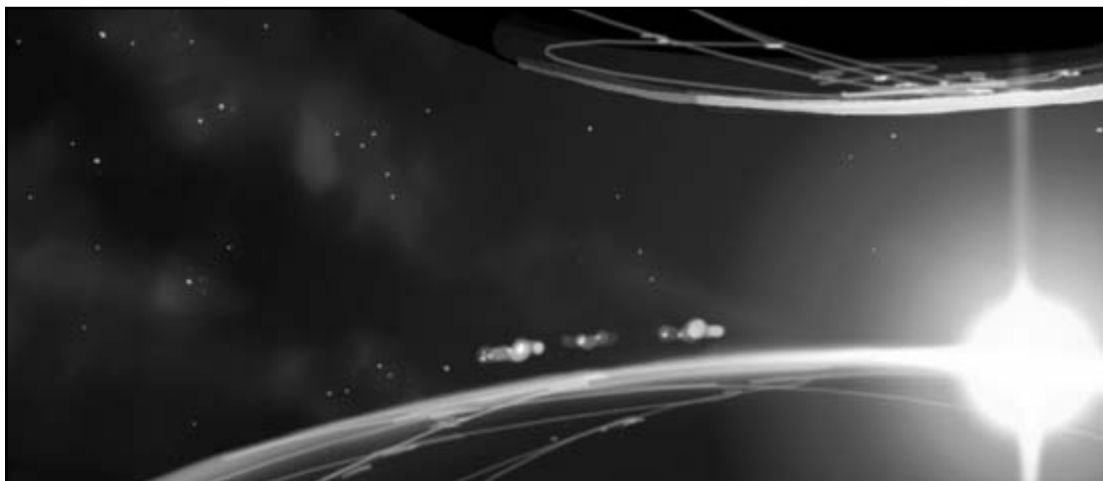
If you go, be sure to bring Bombers. The Shipyard has a Hyperspace Module, and it simply jumps away if it feels it's getting the short end of the stick. Take out the Hyperspace Module first so that it stays put.



Fig. 9-5. Defending Nabaal Shipyard.

NABAAL ARRIVES

The Shipyard Nabaal hyperspaces in at your Mothership's six. Immediately order the Dreadnaught to dock with her. A medium-sized Vaygr Anti-Capital taskforce soon moves in for an assault on the Shipyard. Your own Anti-Capital fleet should soon be on station. As always, focus fire your way to victory, and go "shields up" against the Destroyers. Retask a Resource Collector from the nearby resource pocket to perform repairs on the Shipyard and your fleet. Keep these ships on station—another Vaygr Destroyer is still coming in on the same vector. After you destroy this, feel free to dispatch a small Bomber and Corvette taskforce to explore toward your Mothership's six. There's a Vaygr Hyperspace Gate here, and that can't be good. Send a Destroyer or two back toward your Mothership to provide a stiff Anti-Frigate defense.



"ONESIES AND TWOSIES"

Small numbers of Vaygr ships continue to stream in, trying to find vulnerable targets. Keep an eye out for these, and send only the amount of force you need to deal with the threat. Dispatching all your Corvettes to take down a single enemy Bomber squadron will quickly leave you exposed elsewhere. Minimize your losses by docking Strikecraft squadrons when they're damaged, and by repairing your Capital Ships.

REPAIRING THE DREADNAUGHT

Once the Dreadnaught arrives at the Shipyard, you're notified that it will take 15 minutes to complete repairs. Yes, that's 15 minutes while the Vaygr forces coordinate their attacks on your position. Hunker down and keep your forces together; stragglers can easily become fodder in this "target-rich" environment.

THE ONSLAUGHT BEGINS

You've already dealt with the Destroyer to your six o'clock. Check your twelve o'clock to find another one inbound, supported by Strikecraft vectoring in on your two and eleven o'clock. If you can quickly squeak some Bombers in before the escort arrives, you can bring down the Destroyer with little fuss. Otherwise, wait until your own Destroyers reach engagement range. You have a brief respite from any major attacks now; use it to repair/dock your ships for the coming onslaught.

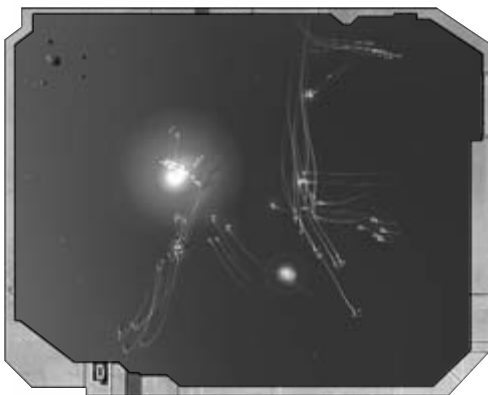


Fig. 9-6. The Destroyer's escort arrives just a moment too late.

FORWARD RESOURCING OP

If the Vaygr have the resources for it (depending on your fleet size), they often send an assault against the resourcing op off your Mothership's port side. Because of the "vertical" travel distance involved, you can let them travel part of the way toward you before moving in with Bombers. Your Resource Collectors can also outrun the Frigates and Destroyers if you don't have the resources to defend this point.

CARRIERS INBOUND

Three Carriers now hyperspace in. They appear about 15 clicks from your Mothership, at your two, four, and eight o'clock positions. Swing your "rear" Anti-Capital force from the Shipyard around to deal with the one at eight o'clock while your forward Anti-Capital fleet moves against the four o'clock position. The Carriers start launching Strikecraft immediately, so have some Corvettes on hand to deal with these.



Fig. 9-7. Not a long battle—Destroyers engage a Vaygr Carrier.

CARRIERS INBOUND: SECOND WAVE

Two more Carriers now hyperspace in at your three and nine, angels-high, filling the skies yet again with Vaygr Strikecraft. Let the Strikecraft come to you (remember the Sphere of Effect for your Fire Control Tower), then send in every Bomber you've got—first taking out one Carrier, then swinging across to the other. Don't use Destroyers or Frigates for this task; move them to just off the Mothership's bow and check damage.

TIP

There are a great number of Vaygr Capital Ships in this mission, and many of them can be isolated from their escorts with little effort. Use your Marine Frigates to pick up a couple of extra Destroyers, if you still have room in your fleet. Even the Carriers are useful as cannon fodder for a little while. Let the Vaygr Bombers chew on Vaygr metal to give your own ships a bit of a free ride.



Fig. 9-8. Vaygr Battlecruiser with inbound Bomber horde.

THIRD WAVE'S THE TRICK

Just when you were becoming proficient at taking down Carriers, the Vaygr switch tactics and hyperspace in a horde of Super Capital Ships. This attack is led by a Battlecruiser off your 12 o'clock, flanked by a team of Destroyers on either side.

Although your Dreadnaught is now repaired, she's a bit too slow to join in the fun this time around. And fortunately, the same tactics that work against isolated Carriers work just as well against Battlecruisers. Send in the Bombers.

While the Battlecruiser moves in on a collision course with your Mothership, the Destroyers try to flank

either side, attempting to reach the Shipyard and take out the Dreadnaught. Even without any escorts, you should be able to take them down with minimal losses.

And that's it. You've succeeded in turning around a bad situation. The Dreadnaught is almost fully functional, and for the first time, you've defeated a massive Vaygr Battlefleet on its own ground.



Fig. 9-9. Not a good day to be a Vaygr Admiral.

ALERT

Before you can break out the bubbly, an incoming message warns you of a dire situation. Before being captured, Captain Soban warns that the Vaygr have found the location of Balcara Gate. Fortunately, the location device aboard Soban's ship provides you with the same information. At the ready, your fleet enters hyperspace to intercept Makaan.



MISSION 10: THE KEEPERS OF SAJUUK

Something has gone terribly wrong. A spectacular power of some sort has pulled your entire fleet out of hyperspace while en route to rescue Captain Soban. It is the Progenitor Keepers, the nightmarishly powerful craft encountered in Mission 8. But now there's more than one of them, and they are hell-bent on destroying your fleet.

You're in the middle of a galactic wasteland, and there is no escape. Either you or the Keepers will be destroyed. Unfortunately, as you've already learned, the Keepers are invulnerable. You won't survive without help.

Mission Objectives

- **Defeat the Keepers.**
- **Repair the Dreadnaught.**
- **Defend Bentus.**



Fig. 9-10. Mission 10 Tactical Map

- 1: **Keeper Ambush**
- 2: **Staging Area**
- 3: **Bentus**
- 4: **Resource Point Alpha**

Mission Strategy

Anything smaller than a Destroyer evaporates almost immediately when under fire by a Keeper and its Attack Drones. Offensively, your fleet should contain at least four Destroyers, more if possible. Defensively, you want at least eight Resource Collectors for repair duty. These are the backbone of your fleet in this mission—lose them and you've lost the war. Supporting them should

be several wings of Pulsar Corvettes and Torpedo Frigates to engage the Drones and harass the Keepers, and Defense Field Frigates to protect your Torpedo Frigates. A pair of Mobile Refineries is useful as well.

DUELING THE KEEPERS

The Progenitor Keepers possess horrific offensive and defensive capabilities. The Drones they launch—while small and possessing only Corvette-class armor—fire ordnance on par with most Capital Ships. Worse, every time you defeat the Drones, the Keepers just generate more.

The Keepers themselves fire powerful weapons akin to Ion Cannons. However, they may do so from any angle, eliminating the delay that many ion-capable ships require to orient themselves toward their target. It takes very little time for a single Keeper to burn down even a Capital Ship once it has focused its attention on one.

These ancient vessels attack in a predictable manner, albeit not from predictable locations. When a Keeper comes under heavy fire, it opens a dimensional portal and vanishes—only to reappear moments later, fully repaired, at some random location. Once again, it vectors in on your fleet, building Drones and blazing away with its cannons until it comes under heavy fire.

Gather all of your Frigates into a tight formation and use Defense Field Frigates to protect them when able. Your Frigates will be destroyed in a matter of seconds if attacked, whereas your Destroyers and Capital Ships will last long enough for you to repair or draw fire away from them.

Control group your Destroyers and order your Mothership and Shipyard to construct Destroyers until you've reached your maximum complement. Use your Resource Collectors to repair any Destroyers or Capital Ships as they are damaged, and focus your Destroyers' and Torpedo Frigates' firepower on one Keeper at a time. Whenever a Keeper vanishes, quickly jump to the Sensors Manager to see from what angle it will next attack, and be prepared for it.

Pummeling the Keepers with your munitions does have an effect on them, as it turns out. When

a Keeper is damaged a little beyond 50 percent of its total health, it briefly glows a brilliant gold, grows transparent, and vanishes entirely—no trace of debris, no sign of any cloaking technology. It simply disappears.

Focus your Destroyer and Frigate fire on the remaining Keeper to make it follow suit. Replace any ships you lose during the battle at your Production Facilities during this time. The battle with the single Keeper is a bit easier to manage and—aside from the momentary respite that follows its defeat—is the only real chance to regroup and organize what you have in this mission.

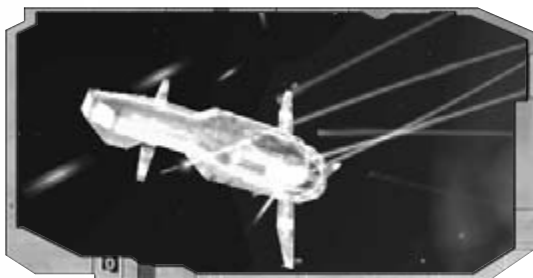


Fig. 9-11. A Keeper “phases” to safety when endangered.

A MOMENT'S PEACE

After you defeat the second Keeper, the wastelands are clear—if only for a few minutes. You have a brief window of opportunity to collect the cache of resources located at Resource Point Alpha. Send eight Resource Collectors and two Mobile Refineries to this location to harvest immediately. Meanwhile, command your remaining Resource Collectors to finish any repairs that need to be completed, giving priority to Capital Ships.

Order the entirety of your fleet to move to the staging area indicated on the map, and instruct your Shipyard, Carrier, and Mothership to begin producing Scouts—no fewer than 14 squads of them. If you have not yet researched Scout EMP, do so immediately. It will give you a crucial edge during the upcoming storm.

THE BENTUSI'S OFFER

Not long after you defeat the Keepers, a massive ship jumps out of hyperspace. Thankfully, it is the Bentusi, your allies. The Bentusi give you your next objective by offering to repair the Great Cannon carried upon the Dreadnaught. That's mighty kind of them—but you're now on the clock. You have *two* minutes between the arrival of Bentus and the moment when your final challenge begins. The sooner you get the Dreadnaught docked with Bentus the better, and you save time by proceeding toward the staging area earlier.

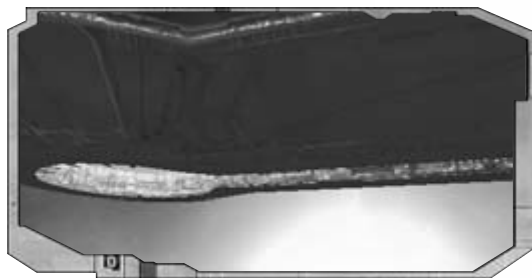


Fig. 9-12. “The Bentusi arrive, and none too soon.”

Upon completing all the Scouts, assign them to a single control group, and set them to passive. You're not paying them for their firepower, and you don't want them attracting the attention of the enemy by firing upon them.

Once the Dreadnaught is docked, you see a timer indicating that it will take up to seven minutes to repair the Dreadnaught's cannon. This may be the longest seven minutes your fleet has encountered.

DESPERATE DEFENSES

Not long after you dock, you receive the harrowing news you knew was coming: “Unidentified craft approaching.” They don't remain unidentified for long, however. Four Keepers are on their way, and they have nothing but the annihilation of Bentus, the Dreadnaught, and the Hiigaran Navy on their minds.



This is not a battle you can win. As before, damaging a Keeper slightly past 50 percent of its health causes it to phase into nonexistence, but now it simply returns at full health between 10 and 30 seconds later. Destroying the Keepers is not an option—but delaying them is.

This is where the Scouts come in. Set to passive, Scouts are low-priority targets for the Keepers and their Attack Drones. First, recall your Resource Collectors and Mobile Refineries from Resource Point Alpha back to the staging area. (Do this even if there are still resources left at the asteroids—you need the Resource Collectors for repair duty for the remainder of the mission.) Next, select your Scout group, make sure it's in tight formation, press the EMP hotkey (**E**) to bring up the targeting cursor, and click on the nearest Keeper. The Scouts swarm toward the Keeper, unleashing a barrage of blue energy. As the blasts pummel the Keeper, you see a secondary blue health bar (much like the "Boarding" health bar) appear and drop to empty. This is the Keeper's EMP shield status bar.

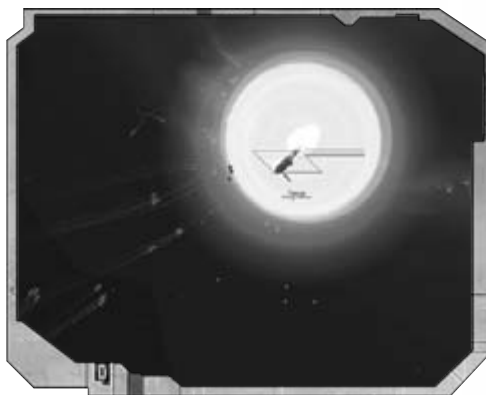


Fig. 9-13. Scouts disable a Keeper with EMP blasts.

Once the Keeper's EMP shields are drained, the Keeper is completely disabled for 30 seconds. A simple contingent of Scouts just bought you 30 more seconds of repair time—not a bad deal. Immediately send the Scouts back to your Mothership. This gets them repaired, as well as refreshes their EMP attack for the next target.

Repeat the process as soon as all the Scouts emerge from the Mothership.

NOTE

It takes 60 seconds for a Scout to recharge its EMP systems.

While using the Scouts to disable the Keepers as often as possible, pay close attention to the Dreadnaught, Bentus, your Mothership, your Shipyard, and your Destroyers. Task your Resource Collectors to repair any ships that come under attack. Direct your Scouts and Destroyers to assault and draw fire from any Keeper that turns its attention on Bentus or the Dreadnaught. The closer you are to Bentus, the easier it is to direct your Destroyers' fire on any threat from any side. But because of the slow movement speed of your Shipyard, the staging area is likely the closest that you'll get.

TIP

Repairing damage at the same speed that the Keepers dish it out is the equivalent of winning in this mission. Micromanaging your Resource Collectors to keep your ships from being destroyed is crucial. Set your Resource Collectors into three control groups of three apiece, and spread the three groups among targets that take the heaviest fire. So what if the Keepers keep cutting bits off of your Destroyers? You'll just grow them back.

Hold out as best you can, use Resource Collectors and Defense Field Frigates to control damage, and promptly rebuild any ships you lose. Every time you get a Keeper to hyperspace away or EMP one into inactivity, you're buying precious time.



THE GREAT CANNON

At long last, repairs on the Dreadnaught's Great Cannon are complete. Is it possible that this weapon will win the battle for you, finally destroying the timeless Keepers?

Maintain your pattern from earlier, but be sure your Destroyers are within range of Bentus. Once the Great Cannon is complete, the Keepers begin attacking Bentus and the Dreadnaught more aggressively. Having your Destroyers in range helps distract them. But most importantly, be sure to command the Dreadnaught to fight back. Once the Dreadnaught selects a target, it orients itself toward it, and you hear the chilling sound of ancient energies being gathered, amplified, and *directed*.



Fig. 9-14. A blinding beam of pure destructive energy, the Great Cannon dwarfs even a Battlecruiser's mighty Ion Cannon. A Keeper caught in this horrendous blast will lose nearly twenty percent of its health, finally granting you the edge you need to lay waste to these horrible machines!

Stay vigilant, maintain your repairs, and concentrate your destructive fire on one Keeper at a time. Tragically, not long after you unleash the power of the Great Cannon, you come to the bleak realization that the Keepers are still invulnerable. They still have the capability to escape on a whim, repair themselves unseen, and return to press the attack.



Maintain your attack until you have forced three Keepers to phase out of existence. At this time, the Bentusi reveal a chilling truth about the Keepers—the only way to permanently destroy them is to immolate them in the explosion of Bentus itself.

The task of the Bentusi now complete, and with the Great Cannon in your hands, you hyperspace to safety just as Bentus explodes into a brilliant halo of radioactive flame, debris, and doom—swallowing the Progenitor Keepers with it.



Fig. 9-15. The sacrifice of Bentus.

Mission 11: SACRIFICE

After the sacrifice of the Bentusi and the destruction of the Keepers, you find yourself at a crossroads. The Bentusi, your allies and protectors, have given their lives to save yours. This can't be undone, but to make their sacrifice worthwhile, you must retrieve the Hyperspace Core fragments from the wreckage of their ship. Unfortunately, the destruction of Bentus has left a field of radioactive debris scattered directly around the fragments.

Mission Objectives

Primary

- Retrieve all of the Hyperspace Core fragments.

Secondary

- Destroy the Vaygr Carrier.
- Destroy the Vaygr Shipyard.
- Destroy all remaining Vaygr ships on the map.



Fig. 9-16. Mission 11 Sector Map

1-3: Hyperspace Core Fragments

4: Vaygr Carrier

5: Vaygr Shipyard

6: Mothership

Mission Strategy

PROBE AWAY

Start this mission with a minimum of five Destroyers, fourteen Frigates, six Interceptor and

six Bomber squadrons, and ten Corvette squadrons. Add to that at least 10 Resource Collectors. The first order of business is to find out exactly where these core fragments are located and how dangerous that radiation is that exists around them.

TIP

Start building at least one Defense Field

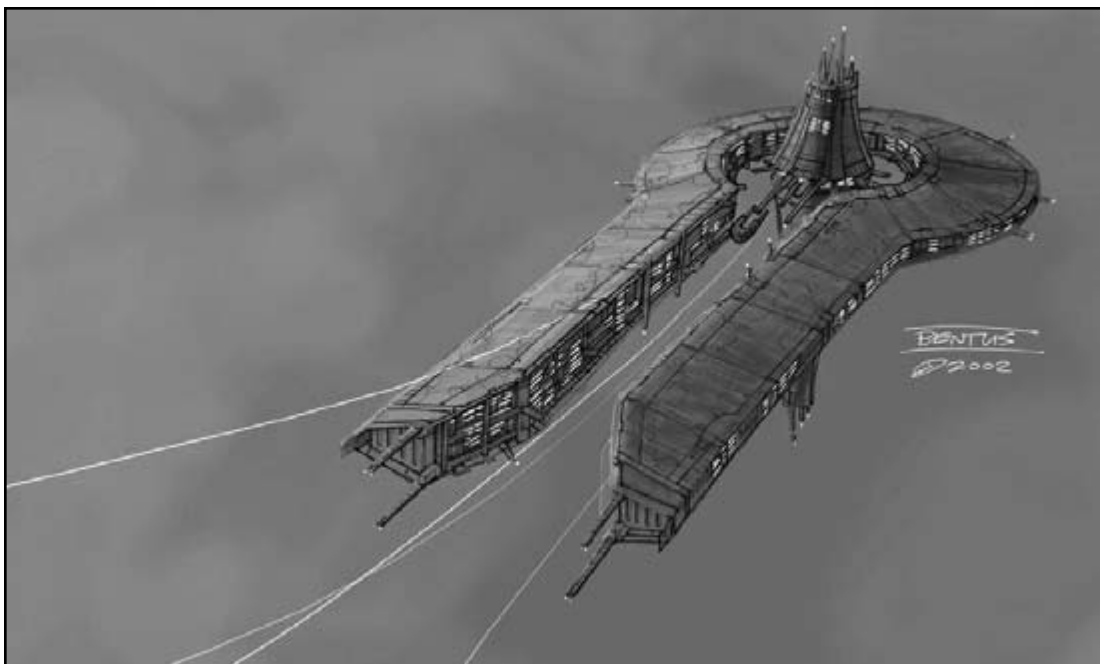
Frigate early on in the mission, as you'll need it later. Don't wait for the Intel Events to prompt you to do so later.

Dispatch your Probe to within sensors range of the main core fragment, directly ahead of you about 22km. Be careful not to send the Probe too close, or it will be destroyed by the radiation surrounding the core. The Probe enters the debris field and gives you an indication of exactly how dangerous that field is. It also allows you to detect any incoming Vaygr forces in the area. Immediately send two more Probes to Locations 4 and 5 as marked in Figure 9-17.

Start collecting resources if you haven't done so already, check the Research Manager for any upgrades that may now be available, and begin researching—especially the one for the Defense Field Frigate. You only have a few moments before hostile contact. Most importantly, start building a Battlecruiser at your Shipyard if resources allow.



Fig. 9-17. Defense Field Frigate research.



The Core Fragments

The most important task is to retrieve the core fragments. Therefore, dispatch a Resource Collector to retrieve the fragment at Location 1. Have a Defense Field Frigate guard it closely. When the Resource Collector gets close to the radiation and debris field, activate the Defense Field Frigate to ensure that it is fully protected during the salvage operation. Before you get to this point, you notice that the Vaygr have hyperspaced onto the map and are closing on your position.

TIP

Send your Resource Collector to a staging area just outside of the area affected by radiation first. Then give the order to retrieve the core fragments. This ensures that you can micromanage the salvage operations since Resource Collectors often fly right into a hazard without warning. You must also activate the Defense Field Frigate manually. By sending both units to a staging area first, you ensure that this operation is successfully managed.

You need to rout the Vaygr forces and eventually lay waste to their entire Strikegroup. To do this, form a Strikegroup comprised of all of your Frigates and Fighters. Attack and destroy the Vaygr shipyard at Location 5. Make sure that the Strikegroup you form doesn't include a Battlecruiser or Corvettes, as you need to reserve that firepower for later.

CAUTION

Be advised that *all* Vaygr ships are radiation shielded and effectively immune to damage in the debris and radiation field. Don't engage Strikecraft in combat within this danger zone, as the Vaygr have a distinct advantage.

By the time you've formed a Strikegroup and have it underway to Location 5 to intercept the Shipyard's Fighter group, Fleet Intel informs you that the main core fragment is being captured by the Vaygr Carrier at Location 4. Once the Vaygr safely retrieves the core fragment, it starts a countdown timer that lasts for seven minutes. This

means you must destroy the Vaygr Carrier within that time to successfully recover the core. Move a second Strikegroup with your Battlecruiser and Corvettes to destroy the Vaygr Carrier at Location 4.

TIP

Once the Vaygr Carrier and its Resource Collectors start capturing the Hyperspace Core fragment, just let them get it for you. It saves you the hassle of trying to retrieve it from the radiation cloud. You must be prepared to destroy the Vaygr Carrier that takes it, but you have to do that anyway to win the mission.

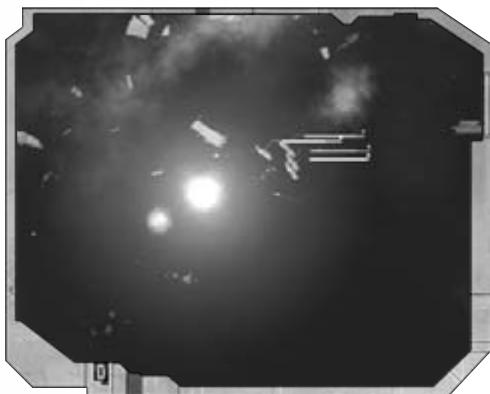


Fig. 9-18. Destroying the Vaygr Carrier.

CLEANING UP THE MESS

Now it is time to clean up the map. Destroy the Vaygr Shipyard at Location 5. Once the Shipyard is destroyed or hyperspaces away, move that Strikegroup to reinforce your forces engaged at Location 4. Both Strikegroups should take heavy damage, but if properly equipped and managed, they should come through with about a 50 percent attrition rate.

It's time to find the core that the Vaygr had aboard the Carrier you just destroyed. It should be located in the same vicinity as the explosion. Send a Resource Collector to retrieve it. It's outside of the debris and radiation field, so there's no need to escort it with a Defense Field Frigate.



Fig. 9-19. The Hyperspace Core fragment is located here.

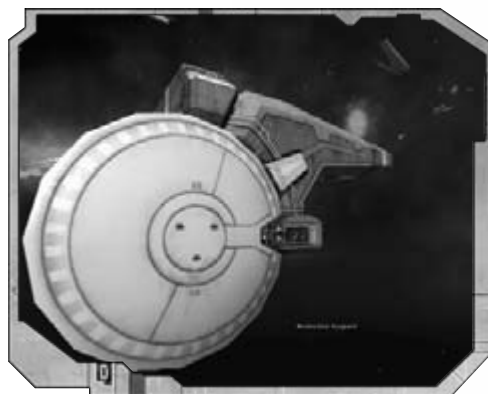
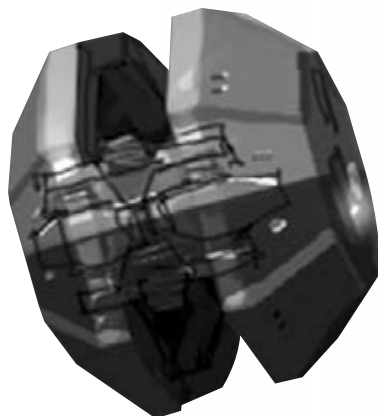


Fig. 9-20. It looks like this.

SALVAGING THE CORES

At this point, finish your salvage operation by micromanaging your Defense Field Frigate and your Resource Collector in the debris and radiation field. Move your Defense Field Frigate close to the core fragments before ordering your Resource Collector to salvage them. Once you've collected all of the fragments, the mission is complete. Rebuild and reinforce your fleet during this time.



Mission 12: THADDIS SABBAN

After retrieving the Hyperspace Core from the debris field, you continue on your mission to rescue Captain Soban. His emergency locator beacon remains active, allowing you to track him. As a prisoner of the Vaygr, he doesn't have much time until undergoing the usually fatal interrogation. You exit hyperspace in the midst of a nebula not far from the Vaygr Command Station where he's being held. The element of surprise will be to your advantage.

Mission Objectives

Primary

- Rescue Captain Soban.

Secondary

- Destroy the Vaygr Fleet.

Mission Strategy

HEAD TO HEAD

This mission is a head-to-head confrontation with the best of the Vaygr Fleet. You face a ton of enemy ships on this mission, so be prepared to suffer some losses and win through a war of attrition. There's also a limited number of resources available on this map, so don't waste any. Make sure to harvest the debris from destroyed Capital Ships to ensure that every opportunity for collecting RUs is exercised.

TIP

This mission starts out relatively slow. You're the one to initiate first hostile contact. Take a few moments to organize your fleet first and ensure that you've properly filled your build queues and have built to your unit cap before unleashing your forces on the unsuspecting Vaygr.

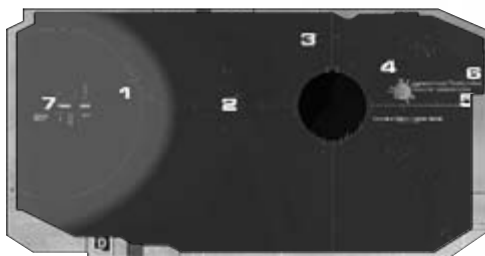


Fig. 9-21. Mission 12 Sector Map

1-3: Nearby Asteroid Resource Pockets

4: Vaygr Carrier

5: Vaygr Shipyard

6: More Vaygr Forces

7: Mothership

Create two Strikegroups. The first is comprised of the Frigates and the Destroyers, the second your Battlecruisers and Corvettes. Move them to Location 2 to engage the enemy's resource operations. Naturally, start harvesting resources at Location 1. The tricky part about this map is that there are not many resources available, so you must keep moving forward toward securing more locations for resourcing operations.

CAUTION

An effective strategy is to move your entire fleet by issuing a move order to the Mothership to head to Location 2 on the map. The slow speed of the Mothership ensures that you have sufficient time to prepare for the coming onslaught, and it allows your entire fleet to arrive in battle simultaneously. However, be warned that such a tactic is fraught with peril if your Mothership has not been fully upgraded. Vaygr Destroyers await you at Location 2 and then can take down an unprotected, nonupgraded Mothership.

Start building platforms at your Mothership—preferably more than 10—so that you needn't worry about whether or not a few Vaygr Corvettes or a Destroyer does significant damage to your Mothership. Secondly, you can use these platforms to secure other resource operations in a few minutes. The bottom line is that this is a great mission to build to your unit cap for both Ion Cannon Platforms and Gun Platforms, as there's plenty of use for them.



Fig. 9-22. The battle for resources.

TIP

Make heavy use of the Resource Collectors' repair ability on this map. It is less expensive than building a load of new Frigates or Destroyers.

As you move forward in this map, destroy every hostile you come in contact with. Using Marine Frigates to capture Vaygr ships is usually fruitless, considering the enormous amount of ships on this map and the fact that Marine Frigates are high-priority targets for them. You'll end up wasting a lot of resources building multiple Marine Frigates to capture just a single ship. And, if you're building to your unit cap anyway, there won't be any room in your fleet for a captured ship.

Resource every possible piece of debris left over from the destruction of both Hiigaran and Vaygr ships. You'll need it for the final battle.



Fig. 9-23. This Vaygr Destroyer is about to bite the dust—left part of frame.



Fig. 9-24. The Vaygr Destroyer explodes in a flash of light and debris.



Fig. 9-25. Resource the debris remnants from the Vaygr Destroyer.

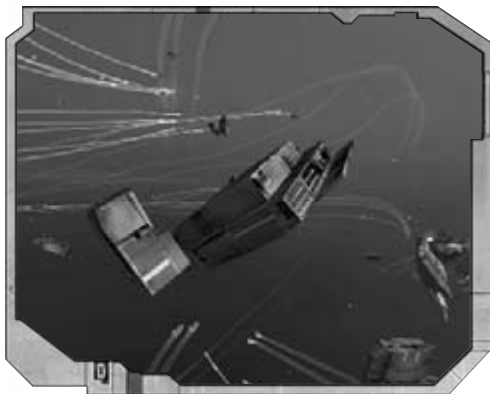


Fig. 9-26. The debris fragment looks like this.

CLOSING IN

As you get closer to the Thaddis Sabbah Command Station, resistance becomes more intense, and the battle rages fiercely. Destroy the Vaygr Carrier at Location 4 before moving forward to cream the rest of the Vaygr forces. Makaan arrives part way through the battle and speaks about your doom. Prove him wrong. The Vaygr fleet kicks out many Destroyers and several Battlecruisers. There are three Shipyards and Makaan's Mothership waiting for you at Locations 5 and 6. They crank out Missile Corvettes, Lance Fighters, Assault Craft, and Bombers to fend off your attacks.

Order your forces to stay away from attacking Thaddis Sabbah as you close in on it. A Hiigaran Battlecruiser will easily devastate that station, with Soban still inside. When it is finally safe, and most of the Vaygr fleet has been reduced to space

debris, send in a Marine Frigate to dock with the station. As Soban is rescued, he sabotages the station and escapes. The station explodes in a burst of light just as the Marine Frigate clears the docking bay.

Now you're free to focus on routing Makaan and his fleet. Don't move forward to engage them until Soban is safe. Soban's rescue is a win condition of this mission. Focused fire from two Battlecruisers, four Destroyers, and several more Frigates ought to bring his elite guard to its knees.



OPERATION SUCCESSFUL

Now that you've successfully rescued Captain Soban, he provides the location of Balcora Gate. This gate provides the entryway to the black star at the heart of the galaxy. Continue your pursuit of Makaan at that location. Good luck.



CHAPTER 10: ASCENSION

MISSION 13: BALCORA GATE

Using the coordinates provided by Captain Soban, the fleet arrives at Balcora Gate, a massive Progenitor artifact and the only means of reaching Sajuuk. After arriving, you quickly discover Makaan has entered Balcora Gate and ordered his remaining fleet to delay you by any means possible.

Mission Objectives

- Destroy the Vaygr forces attacking the gate's Power Generators.
- Investigate power signature.
- Destroy Vaygr Shipyard.
- Use Dreadnaught to activate Balcora Gate.
- Protect the Dreadnaught.



Fig. 10-1. Mission 13 Sector Map

- 1: Start Position
- 2: Balcora Gate
- 3: Vaygr Shipyard
- 4: Contested RU Pocket

Mission Strategy DEFENSE

As the mission starts, a wave of Vaygr attackers vectors to your start location. While not a massive threat, this Vaygr force tries to keep you busy, allowing its reinforcements to close in. Do not let this initial attack force distract you. Send some Flak and Torpedo Frigates to delay it.

In the midst of this battle, your first priority is to organize your fleet to deal with the Vaygr attackers. First, create a defense taskforce (Taskforce Alpha) composed of an equal mix of every Frigate type, supported by some Bombers and Interceptors. This taskforce does not have to be large, just well balanced. Order it to guard the Mothership and Shipyard. Your Shipyard is a tempting target for the Vaygr, so do not leave it undefended for long.

The second taskforce (Taskforce Beta) is your Main Battle Fleet. Load it up with Battlecruisers and Frigates, and support it with Corvettes. Its job is to hunt down any Vaygr Capital Ships lurking near Balcora.

The final taskforce (Taskforce Gamma) needs to be fast but well armed. It should include Destroyers, Ion Cannon Frigates, and as many Strikecraft as you can spare. Its task is to move in and defend Balcora Gate.

Finally, the Dreadnaught should have a small escort, but leave it on its own. Its job is to support Taskforce Alpha, Beta, and Gamma. Make sure you assign two Resource Collectors to continually repair the Dreadnaught.

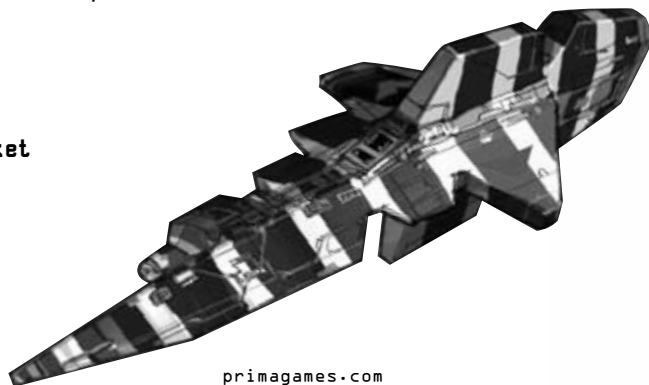




Fig. 10-2. Makaan enters Balcara Gate. Beyond rests Sajuuk, the Great Maker.

TIP

Now that your fleet includes a healthy mix of Capital Ships, keeping them in fighting shape is important. For each taskforce, build two Resource Collectors and assign them to repair **[Y]** the taskforce to which they are assigned. This will ensure they repair any battle damage as it happens, allowing you to concentrate on the big picture. Also remember that you can pause the game to organize your fleet at the start of each mission.

With your taskforces ready, it is time to focus on your resourcing operation and begin scouting the general area.

RESOURCING

Resourcing is critical. From this mission forward, the Vaygr throw everything that they have at you. You desperately need every possible RU in order to defeat them. However, do not send your Resource Collectors undefended toward the nearby RU pocket because the Vaygr will likely try to contest it. Defending this pocket shouldn't be too hard, but it should be a priority. Gunship Corvettes and Gun Platforms should do the trick. However, as extra insurance, sending two Minelayer Corvettes to mine the Vaygr approach ensures that your defenders only have to deal with the occasional survivor.

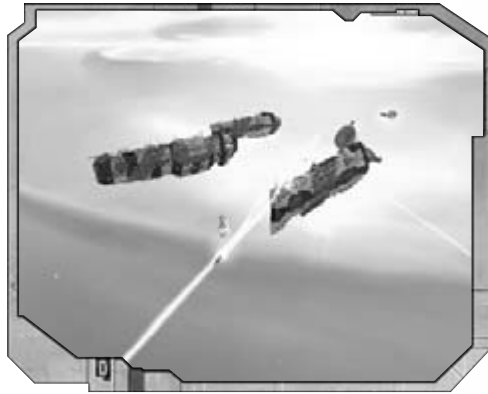


Fig. 10-3. The Vaygr defend their resource operation at all costs. Remember to mine the approach to this RU pocket.

TIP

Remember that Minelayers replenish any minefield they create as long as you do not give them new orders. This way, two Minelayers can continually lay a minefield that should seriously damage any Frigates or Capital Ships the Vaygr send. However, make sure you give the Minelayers some Pulsar Gunship or Torpedo Frigate escorts.

The Vaygr have some Capital Ships in the area—these become the first target for Taskforce Beta and the Dreadnaught. While they're distracted, you can move your resourcing operation into the area and lay down the minefield.

LOCATE THE SHIPYARD

When the resource pocket is under your control, focus on finding that Shipyard and stopping the Vaygr from building more Capital Ships. Scouting is essential for this. Build Probes and Scouts and send them to the left and right of Balcara. Once you have located the Shipyard, order Taskforce Beta to attack. While Beta is en route, build Bombers. Their job is to swoop in and target the Vaygr Shipyard's subsystem. Focus on the Capital Ship Facility, followed by Research Modules. Once the Shipyard is destroyed, order these Bombers to target the Vaygr Battlecruiser weapon systems.

Depending on how well defended the Vaygr Shipyard is, you can order the Dreadnaught to support Taskforce Beta. Order it to target any Battlecruisers the Vaygr have in the area.



Fig. 10-4. The Vaygr Shipyard—destroying it cripples Vaygr Capital Ship production.

DEFEND BALCORA GATE

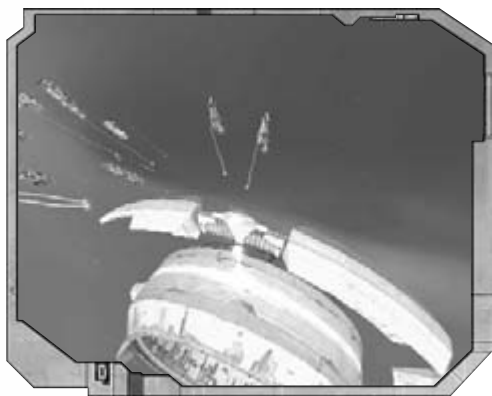


Fig. 10-5. The Vaygr concentrate their fire on the three Power Generators. Defend them.

When you decide to defend Balcora Gate is up to you, but make sure you do not wait for too long. The Vaygr have three Frigate taskforces attacking each of the Power Generators. However, only one is needed to maintain the gate in an operational state. Order Taskforce Gamma to target the top or bottom gate attackers and focus on destroying them. Defending the Power Generator near the Vaygr Shipyard is suicide since the bulk of the

Vaygr fleet is located there. Since only one Power Generator is needed, do not waste time splitting Taskforce Gamma. Destroy one set of attackers before moving to the next.

CONSOLIDATION

By this time, the Shipyard should be close to destruction and the gate secured. All that is left is mopping up the last of the Vaygr attackers. While this is happening, start rebuilding your fleet for the next mission.

Once the last of the Vaygr are defeated, move the Dreadnaught into proximity with Balcora Gate.

INTO BALCORA

With the Vaygr defeated, the Dreadnaught initiates the gate activation sequence, allowing your fleet to jump into the heart of the galaxy—to the black hole at Balcora.

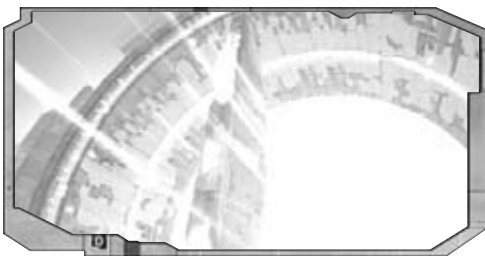


Fig. 10-6. The Mothership enters Balcora Gate.



Mission 14: BALCORA

In the heart of Balcora, a battle will decide the fate of Sajuuk, the Great Maker. For untold millennia, Sajuuk has rested in the natural Gravity Well at the center of the galaxy. Now Makaan and Karan must decide the fate of this last Progenitor, and in turn, bring an end to the Prophecy of the Three.

Mission Objectives

Primary

- Protect the Mothership.
- Defeat Makaan.

Secondary

- Destroy the Vaygr Shipyard.

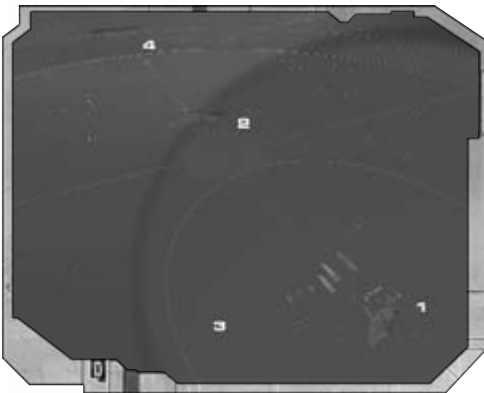


Fig. 10-7. Mission 14 Sector Map

- 1: Start Location
- 2: Sajuuk
- 3: Vaygr Flanking Force
- 4: Makaan

Mission Strategy **THE LAST STAND**

Right from the start, a large Vaygr Destroyer fleet forms the first line of defense for Makaan. However, the fleet is not content with defense; it instead immediately attacks.

Defending against this attack should not be too difficult, especially if you have Battlecruisers and

Destroyers. Be careful not to commit all your forces to this initial assault because a second attack wave hits your left flank shortly after the first.

However, do not let these attacks steal all your attention. To defeat Makaan, you need a large and formidable fleet. So setting up harvesting operations and queuing up build orders are a must.

Again, like in the previous mission, splitting your force into a number of taskforces is beneficial. This allows you to quickly move about your fleet without overcommitting on any one front.



Fig. 10-8. Sajuuk is the ultimate prize.

This mission quickly becomes a war of attrition. However, the key to victory is not building more units (which takes time), but rather keeping the ships you have—especially Destroyers and Battlecruisers—fighting the longest. Once you have established a good resourcing operation, assign as many Resource Collectors as you can spare to repair duty. Group them in squadrons of three and assign them a hotkey group. This way you can quickly order the Resource Collectors to repair any ships that are being damaged. Do not wait until these ships are in the red. By this time it's too late. You have to keep a close eye on their health and practice battlefield triage—deciding what ships are worth saving is critical.

Using Defense Field Frigates to protect key taskforces is also a wise tactic. Offensive minefields, placed along routes the Vaygr use to attack you, also ensure you don't face intact enemy Strikegroups.



Fig. 10-9. The first wave—the Vaygr rely on Destroyers and Battlecruisers to defend Makaan.

THE SHIPYARD

Although this is a secondary objective, you should make hunting down and destroying Makaan's Shipyard (and any Vaygr Carriers) a top priority. They are likely to be well defended, but crippling Makaan's production capabilities prevents him from putting up much of a fight.

Destroying the Shipyard gives you free reign to harvest without having to compete with Vaygr Resource Collectors. Assign a small taskforce to hunt down the Vaygr Shipyard early on. The sooner this threat is out of commission, the better your chances are at defeating Makaan. While this is happening, build up a formidable fleet to defeat

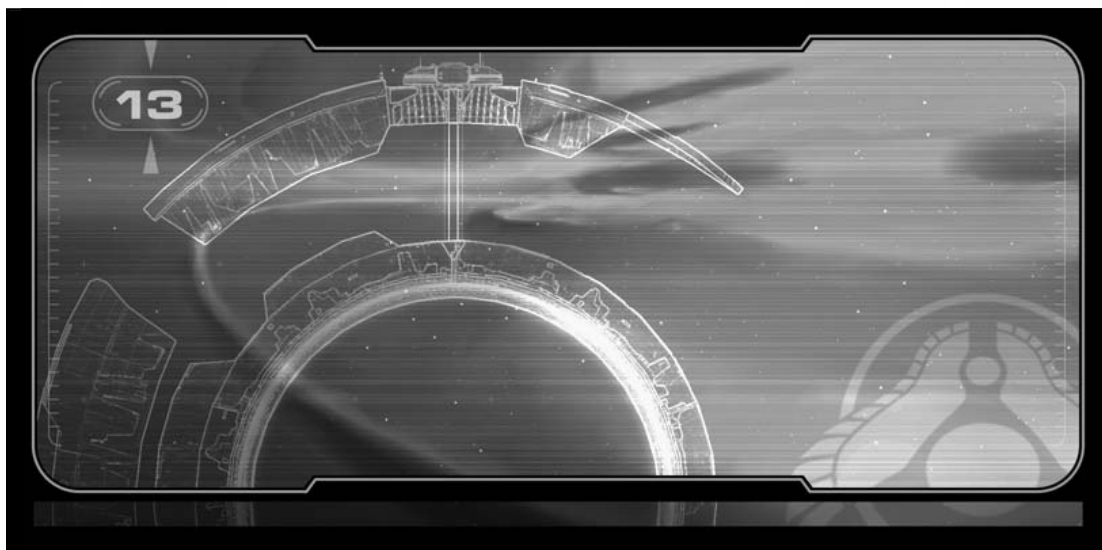


Fig. 10-10. A Hugaran Bomber squadron makes a last, desperate attack.

MAKAAN



Fig. 10-11. Makaan, the Vaygr warlord, makes his last stand.



Makaan has a large fleet defending him. The Vaygr warlord doesn't go down without a bloody and decisive fight. If you are not prepared, you will not last long. To successfully defeat Makaan you must maneuver your fleet as one, even while the Vaygr are attacking on as many fronts as possible.

Delay attacking Makaan until you have at least two healthy Battlecruisers and a few Destroyers to do so. Once you are ready, make sure you have scouted his location. A frontal attack would be a recipe for disaster. Makaan has a number of Battlecruisers and his Dreadnaught waiting.

Instead, create two taskforces composed of fast Frigates and Corvettes, and attempt to draw Makaan's Battlecruiser and Dreadnaught away from him (and if possible into a minefield if you can set one up in secret).

Once he's distracted, send your main fleet in for the kill. Even if you manage to defeat Makaan's escorts, he does not go down without a fight. As a last, desperate measure, he orders his Strikecraft to kamikaze into your Capital Ships. You need at least five Flak Frigates and a number of Gunships to defend your Capital Ships from Makaan's suicide pilots. These ships can do a lot of damage and easily take out your Frigates and Destroyers, and possibly even a Battlecruiser. Flak Frigates should be able to destroy most of the kamikaze attackers before they reach your ships.



Fig. 10-12. The Vaygr stop at nothing to defeat you.

TIP

Captain Soban should be around from the last few missions.

Assign him a small escort and keep him out of the fight. That way, you can use him to swoop in and capture any Vaygr Capital Ships that are not heavily defended. It is often quicker to capture or disable a Vaygr ship than to destroy it. Assigning Soban to mop-up duty is an effective tactic, thus allowing your main fighting forces to deal with fresh Vaygr.

GLORY BE TO THE SAJUUK-KHAR

With Makaan defeated, the Hiigarans finally assume their destiny as the Sajuuk-Khar, the chosen of Sajuuk. Having reclaimed the Three Cores, the Hiigarans are now in control of Sajuuk.

However, one last task remains—to lift the Siege of Hiigara. Leaving the Pride of Hiigara in Balcara, the Hiigaran Fleet jumps to the home system with Sajuuk leading the way.



Fig. 10-13. At this moment a dark cloud gathers over Hiigara.

MISSION 15: RETURN TO HIIGARA

A cloud gathers over the skies of Hiigara. Although their leader has been defeated, the Vaygr are not about to give up. The largest of the Vaygr fleets waits high above Hiigara, its final orders: to decimate your Homeworld.

Mission Objectives

- Destroy the Vaygr Blockade forces.
- Use Sajuuk to destroy the three Planetary Bombardment Platforms.
- Protect Hiigara from destruction by destroying any missiles that are launched.

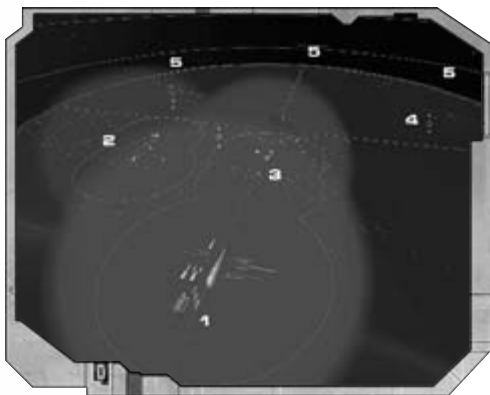


Fig. 10-14. Mission 15 Sector Map

- 1: Start Position
2-4: Vaygr Blockade Forces
5: Vaygr Planet Killers

Mission Strategy LIFT THE BLOCKADE

With Sajuuk leading the way, your fleet arrives as the last of the Hiigaran defenders attempt to stall the Vaygr blockade forces. A battle rages over the skies of Hiigara, but it is only a matter of time before the last few Hiigaran ships are defeated by the Vaygr armada. Only the timely arrival of Sajuuk and the Hiigaran Fleet can prevent this.



Fig. 10-15. The Vaygr blockade.

The final battle against the Vaygr is a time of decisive action. However, it is all too easy to be carried away and blindly issue attack orders. You must carefully pick your targets and form your fleet into Strikegroups, each with a particular target.

Start by sending a Capital Phalanx toward the Vaygr line. Make sure this taskforce has all your Battlecruisers, the Dreadnaught, and a good mix of Frigates and Strikecraft. Support this with two Frigate Lines, one on each flank. Assign at least one Destroyer to each Frigate Line. Then set up two fast-moving Fighter Screen Strikegroups to act as reinforcements and to attack any Vaygr resourcing operations. However, make sure you keep some Interceptors in reserve; you'll need these later. Also, order your Carriers to deploy evenly along the debris field near the start position.



Fig. 10-16. With nothing to lose, the Vaygr attack Hiigara.

Unless you are desperately short on RUs (less than 5,000), assign your Resource Collectors into smaller groups and give them a control group number. Use the Resource Collectors to repair your fleet. This is critical if you want to keep your Frigate alive for any period of time. Resist the



temptation to repair your Capital Ships since they can usually take more punishment, and focus instead on your Frigates.

TIP

Capital Ships have more health than Frigates and can take more damage. However, you usually have more Frigates, meaning more targets for the Vaygr gunners to choose from. Instead of concentrating on your handful of Battlecruisers and Destroyers, the Vaygr will need to keep track of multiple targets, forcing them to split their fire. You can use this to your advantage, and in the long run it will help keep your Capital Ships from taking the brunt of the enemy fire. The same holds true for multi-player games.



Fig. 10-17. Vaygr Bombers attack with the sun at their six.

UNLEASH SAJUUK

As your taskforces move into contact with the Vaygr blockade, move Sajuuk toward the center of the sector, using his powerful cannon to blast troublesome Destroyers and Battlecruisers in his path.

Sajuuk, while immensely powerful, is slow. Make sure you get him moving as soon as possible. His cannon is also fixed forward, meaning Sajuuk can only fire at targets directly in front of him. Therefore, don't waste time targeting Vaygr ships that are to the side or behind Sajuuk. Instead, try to line up targets so that Sajuuk can hit them without having to turn. It only takes a few shots from Sajuuk's main cannon to destroy Capital Ships, so concentrate your fire on one target at a time.



Fig. 10-18. The last of the Progenitor Flagships arrives to lift the Siege at Hiigara.

THE PLANET KILLERS

Soon after attacking the main blockade forces, the Vaygr unleash their final surprise. Three ancient Planet Killers emerge from hyperspace. These are the dark clouds that Makaan prophesied would gather over the skies of Hiigara. Where the Vaygr unearthed these ancient machines is a secret Makaan took to his grave. Nonetheless, these three ships stand poised to destroy Hiigara.



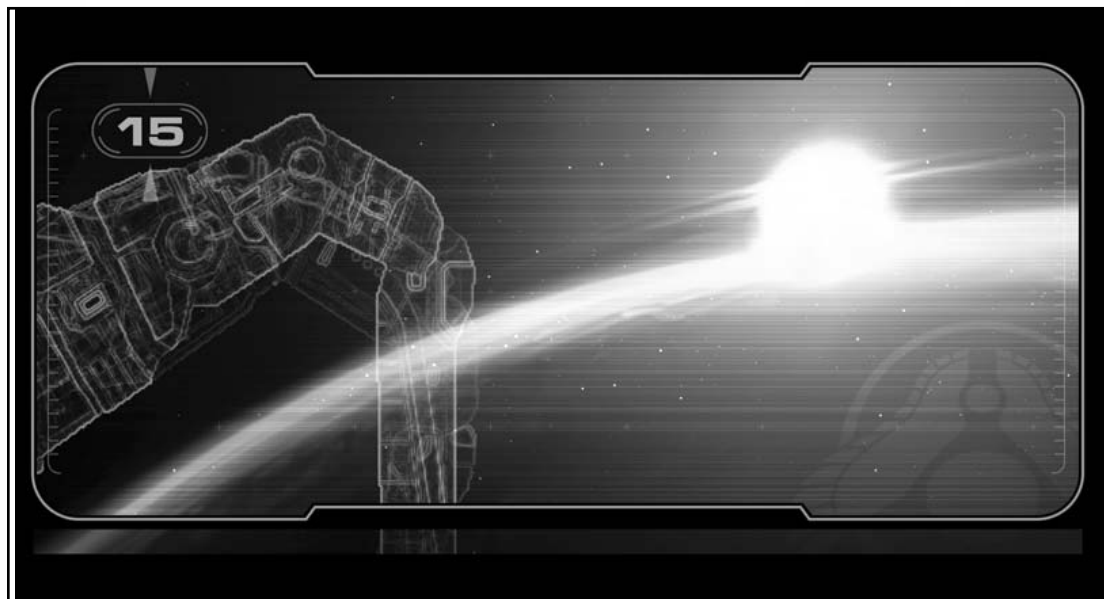
Fig. 10-19. A glimpse of the Planet Killer.

Your first order of business is to begin construction of Interceptor squadrons. You need at least two to three Interceptors to destroy each missile. Create three Interceptor groups and assign them to a different hotkey. The first patrols the left flank, the second the center, and the third the right.

Do not send your Interceptors directly at the missiles. Instead, select all your Gunships and order them to start attacking the missiles, leaving your Interceptors to hunt down any that manage to make it through.

However, keep careful tabs on your Interceptors and do not leave them unsupervised. They could easily fall prey to any remaining Vaygr forces, or worse, pursue the missiles into Hiigara's atmosphere, taking them out of the fight.

Don't forget about the Vaygr or the Planet Killers at this point. Continue using your



Strikegroups to attack any remaining Vaygr. They have nothing to lose and relentlessly throw themselves against your fleet. More than ever before, you need to keep careful tabs on your fleet, making sure Sajuuk is well defended and that you have resources coming in.

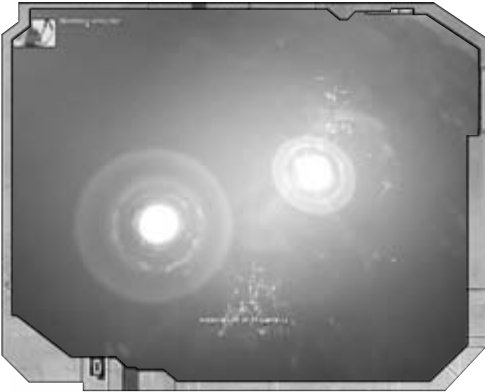


Fig. 10-20. Planetary Bombardment Missiles impact along Hiigara's southern continent.



Fig. 10-21. Sajuuk unleashes his fury.

The Age of S'Jet

With the last of the Planet Killers destroyed and the Vaygr Fleet in tatters, Hiigara is finally safe. Above her skies a new sentinel stands guard. Sajuuk has returned, proclaiming the Hiigarans as the Sajuuk-Khar.

Congratulations, you have brought the Hiigarans to victory.



CHAPTER 11: MULTIPLAYER STRATEGIES

ORIENTATION

Nothing is more challenging, or rewarding, than facing another *Homeworld2* expert in combat. While the computer player pulls its tactics from a limited bag of tricks, your human opponents always find new ways to foil your best-laid plans.

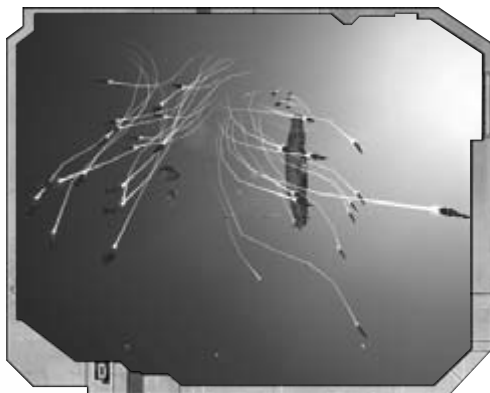


Fig. 11-1. Swarms of Bombers are a deadly early threat.

Opening Moves

The decisions you make in the first few moments have a critical impact on your chances for victory. You must maximize resource collection, build a defensive Fighter screen, and probe your opponent. These are all "must-do" moves within the first minutes of the game.

Bomber rushes are a very popular opening tactic. If your opponent can take out your Mothership's subsystems early, he can easily win the battle before it's even started.

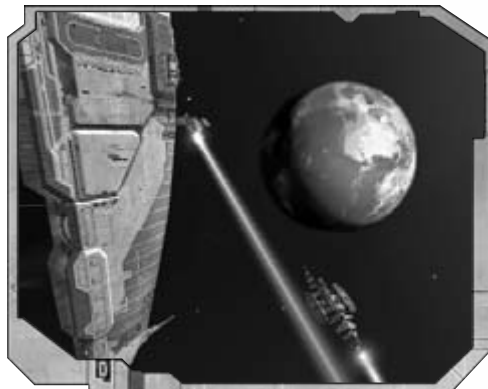


Fig. 11-2. Bombing run on a Mothership's subsystems.



OPENING BUILD SEQUENCE (DEFENSIVE)

- Four Resource Collectors
- Fighter Facility
- Three Interceptors
- Probe

OPENING BUILD SEQUENCE (OFFENSIVE)

- Four Resource Collectors
- Fighter Facility
- Three Bombers
- Probe
- Three Interceptors

OPENING BUILD SEQUENCE: DESTROYER GAMBIT

- Research Module
- Fighter Facility
- Three Bombers
- Three Interceptors
- Capital Ship Facility
- Destroyer Tech
- Three Interceptors
- Destroyer

This approach is trickier—you're essentially rushing for Destroyers while building a small token force to keep any Bomber raids from hurting you. A single Destroyer can make all the difference if you get it early enough.

Once the first Destroyer is finished, go for Improved Manufacturing to pump out all the Frigates and Corvettes you need to keep the Destroyer alive.

Opening Tactics

Try to get your opponents feeling hemmed in and hounded from the first moments of the game. Send a Probe to the far side of a resource zone they're likely to exploit. Let them *know* that you're watching them. Your goal here is to put your adversaries on the defensive—reacting to your initiative rather than building their own. You *choose* to send out the Probes, leaving your opponents no choice but to destroy them. Let them get used to reacting to you, and you've won half the battle.



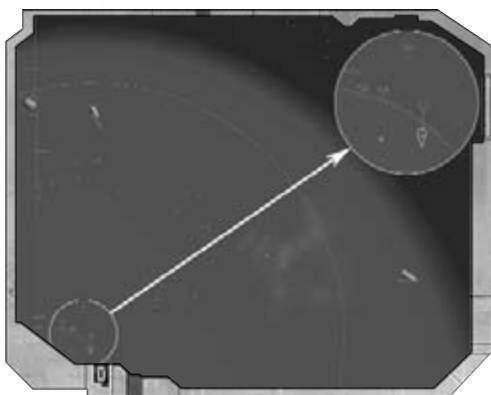
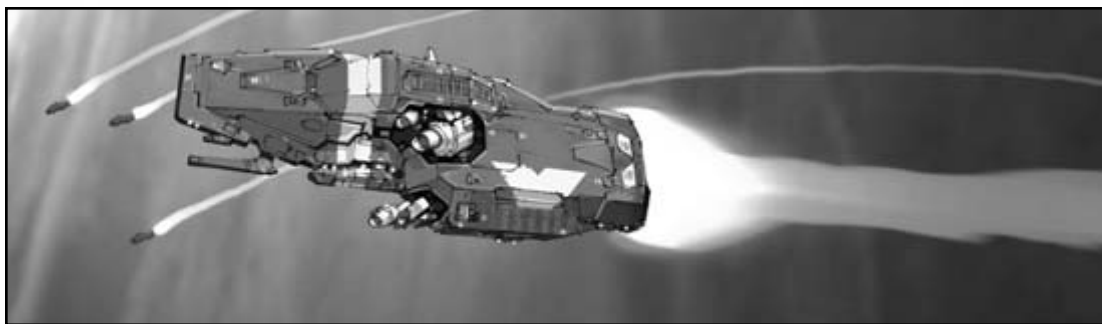


Fig. 11-3. A Probe manages to draw off several Strikecraft squadrons. Who's defending the Mothership?

BOMBER RUSH

The goal of a Bomber rush is not to immediately destroy your opponent, but to seek out vulnerabilities, exploit them, and develop them into game-winning strategic imbalances. If a resource operation is undefended, you can seriously hamper your opponent's logistics. The prime target of Bomber rushes, however, is subsystems.

If you can take out your opponent's Fighter subsystem early in the game, you're well on the way to winning. Likewise, a strike on the Resource Drop-Off point can be a crippling logistical blow early in the game.

By adding an Interceptor or Assault Craft wing to your Bomber force, you give yourself some ability to deal with enemy Fighters. This is easier to accomplish if you build a second Fighter Facility early in the game.

To continue this approach, build a Research Module, and continue to research Fighter upgrades so that you can maintain Fighter superiority.

BOMBER RUSH: DEFENDING

It takes approximately eight bombing runs to destroy a subsystem. To properly defend yourself, you must ensure that your opponent is *never* in a position to deliver such a blow to you.

Build Interceptors/Assault Craft early and often. Never let your defensive screen get separated from the fleet it's protecting.

If you do find yourself in the position where enemy Fighters outnumber you, set your launch policy to "stay docked." Dock your existing Fighters and build up your forces until you've reached near-parity, then release them all at once and focus fire your way to freedom. This is much more effective than having individual squadrons straggle out, only to be cut to pieces by focused fire.

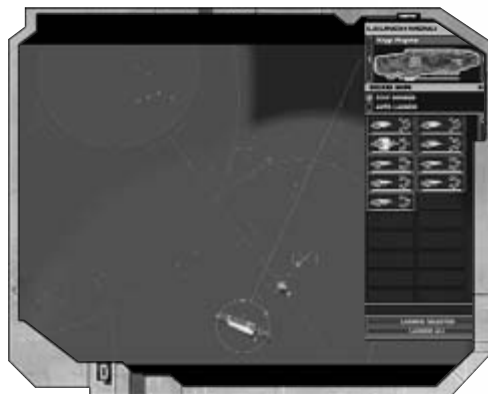


Fig. 11-4. Ready to scramble: those incoming Bombers won't know what hit them.

To create a trap for your opponent's Bomber rush, keep your Fighters docked when you build them (dock several squadrons at the Carrier as well, to minimize launch time). When your

opponent comes screaming in with Bombers, quickly pounce upon them and count the seconds until they're all gone. It won't take long.

SCOUTING

Although *Homeworld2* is a fully 3D world, many people treat it as a 2D one, moving in a straight line to their target, always staying at the same elevation. Don't let this be you.



Fig. 11-5. "I see you, but you can't see me." Covert recon is a great technique to master.

Scouts are an invaluable part of your fleet, giving you an early-warning system that can fall back once the enemy appears. The computer opponent has excellent scouting technique, always keeping its recon ships just outside of your sensor range. You can do this too if you position your Scouts carefully, allowing them to stay on station much longer before they are detected. To make yourself even *harder* to find, deploy a Sensors Distortion Probe near your Scout—your opponent will have to come much closer in order to see you.

Because your fleet is operating in a 3D world, your recon detachment should as well. Send a Scout directly "above" and "below" your fleet to prevent an opponent from sneaking up on you (this is a common tactic).

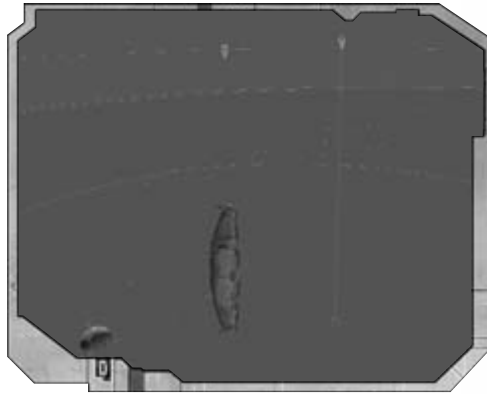


Fig. 11-6. Opponents are less likely to search for Probes off the world-plane.

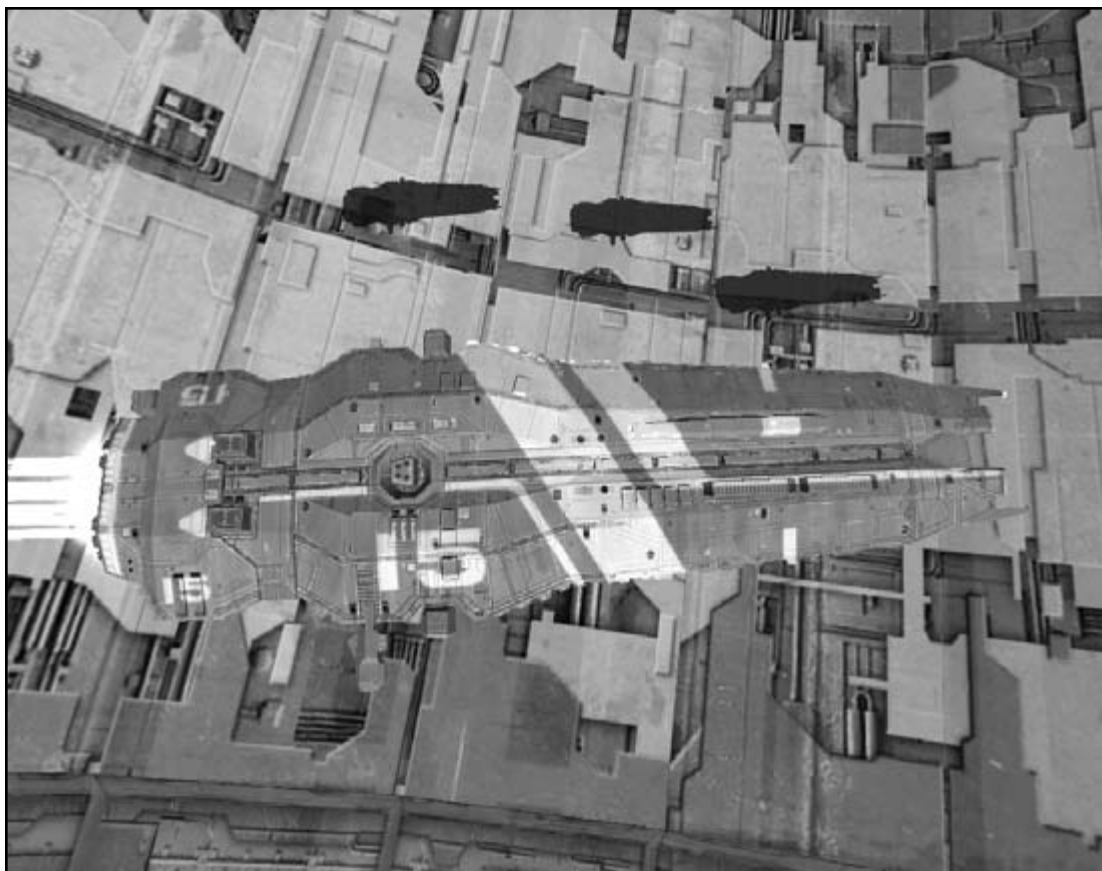
TIP

Scouts are best put on a Waypoint patrol. As long as they're moving, they're much harder to hit. They're also great for leading an enemy on a "wild goose chase." If you have the time to micromanage them, Scouts are much more flexible than Probes.

Later in the game, the Scout's EMP ability can be a great way of breaking up an enemy assault. Follow the EMP blast with Marine or Infiltrator Frigates; disabled ships can't shoot back or even hyperspace away.



Fig. 11-7. An EMP attack leaves this Destroyer a sitting duck for 30 seconds.



Probes are well suited to extending your sensor range around your zone of control, as well as providing a brief glimpse into an enemy's base. When you dispatch a Probe toward an enemy formation, first count hull types, then peek at subsystems. Being able to recognize particular subsystem types—without doing a mouseover—is a valuable ability to develop.

Fleet Composition

Surprise is an important element in gaining strategic advantage. Once you've performed a heavy Bombing raid or two on an opponent, he'll soon expect another, similar attack and usually build up to defend accordingly. The best thing to do in this situation is to baffle the enemy by coming back with an entirely different fleet lineup.

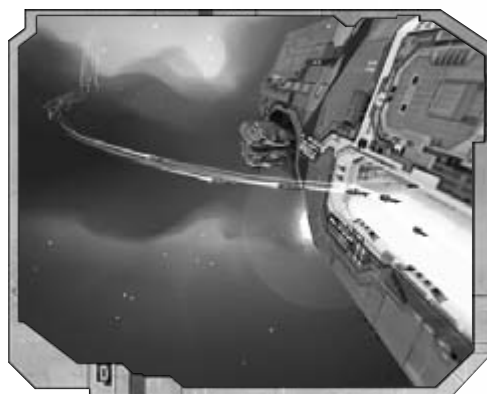


Fig. 11-8. Melting down Assault Craft to expand the Bomber force.

Retiring Strikecraft is a fast process, and relatively cheap as well. Most importantly, it keeps your opponents guessing about what you'll throw at them *this* time.

Raiding Techniques

Raiding is a time-honored method of whittling down opponents' strength, readying them for the final showdown. There are several techniques you may wish to explore.

FEINT AND JAB

Run a fast Anti-Capital force around to the far side of an opponent's sensor range (where he *won't* expect an attack), then perform a feint attack from the other side, to draw the enemy Strikecraft forward. Your unopposed time on target is small, but it should be sufficient for a subsystem attack.

TRAPPER RAID

Outfit your raiding taskforce with both a Hyperspace Module and a Hyperspace Inhibitor. This allows you to pounce upon an enemy location. Then, once you arrive, your opponent cannot hyperspace away.

"SALTING THE SOIL"

If you're ever so fortunate as to find an undefended resource operation, spike it with a minefield and watch the fireworks. You can also use this as a "resource denial" tactic. Though the Minelayer is vulnerable, it gives you advanced warning when an opponent intends to move into a resource pocket.

TIP

A "Probe raid," while harmless, can confuse and distract your

opponent when it's combined with one or more assault prongs. Send Probes to any enemy emplacement you *won't* be attacking to create the feel of a full frontal assault—if only briefly. The more Probes, the better the effect.

Dealing with Super Capital Ships

There are few moments more horrifying than seeing an opponent's Battlecruiser while your biggest guns are still Frigate based. To turn the tide, there are a few tactics you can use.

Break up your opponent's fleet integrity. Do a flyby with a couple of Interceptor squadrons, and see if the hostile Strikecraft follow after you. If you can clear the way to move Bombers in, you're a long way to evening the field.

Always take out critical subsystems. There is absolutely no point in weakening a Battlecruiser, only to have it jump away to a protected location.

Remember: Super Capital Ships are always vulnerable to Bombers. Even a Defense Field Frigate does nothing to protect against a subsystem raid.

TIP

The Vaygr Battlecruiser can be effectively disabled by

taking out its engines. The main cannon at the front of the ship has very little coverage. Without the engines to maneuver it into position, the ship becomes combat ineffective.



Fig. 11-9. It's impossible to escape the clutches of this hunter-killer Battlecruiser outfitted with both a Hyperspace Module and a Gravity Well.

Upgrades

Upgrades can make a big difference; increased speed makes Strikecraft more effective and also lets you disengage from slower enemies. This is just as true for Capital Ships.

Only spend the resources on upgrading ships that are heavily represented in your fleet. It's never worth it to upgrade a single ship or squadron.

Keeping the Heat On

by Damon Gauthier (game designer)

As in any good RTS, there are always two divergent philosophies behind winning. In my opinion, the best strategy is to "rush" your opponent. The alternative is to build up your defenses and your economy, which we refer to as the "turtle."

So do you want to be a rusher? In that case, the best bet is to follow the rusher's motto, "The best defense is a good offense." If your opponent is fighting tooth and nail in his own base trying to keep Resource Collectors and subsystems alive, he won't be able to mount an effective offense. Keep up the pressure and you will be successful.

Resource collection rate is a key component to this rush strategy. You must have a critical number of Resource Collectors to sustain the production of Interceptors and Bombers from two Fighter Facilities. This requires ten Resource Collectors and five "latch points." (Latch points are the points on which Resource Collectors can attach to asteroids. See Chapter 12 for more on latch points.) Once this critical number has been met, concentrate on keeping the heat on your opponent.

To implement this strategy, start by building Interceptors out of Fighter Facilities on both your Mothership and Carrier at the start of a game. Queue up six Interceptor squadrons in your Mothership and six in your Carrier. Once a total of six squadrons of Interceptors appear, start the attack on the enemy. Initially, target enemy Interceptors. Once you have demonstrated military superiority in the vicinity of the enemy Mothership, start producing Bombers.

There are several steps to the successful implementation of this "keeping the heat on" strategy. The first priority is to destroy the enemy military units. Then focus on Corvette Facilities (Corvettes are superior to Fighters, so get rid of that threat first). The third priority is to destroy the Platform Controllers (they provide an effective defense at a minimal cost). Next, destroy the enemy Fighter Facilities (this prevents the enemy from producing units to counter your Fighters and Bombers). The final point in the successful execution of this strategy is to keep up the heat on your overwhelmed enemy. To do this effectively, set the rally points (using [P]) from your Mothership and Carrier to a point near the conflict. This ensures that any Fighters and Bombers produced will travel immediately to the battle. Keep clicking on the Build

Manager so that you are assured of a constant supply of Fighters and Bombers.

Successfully rushing your opponent with a single wave of Fighters is simply not enough. You must keep the heat on. Your enemy's Hull Defense Guns are going to eventually pick off your Fighters over time. Their Production Facilities can spit out enough defending units to drive you away, unless your force is overwhelming. Therefore, you must always be producing Fighters and reinforcing your engaged squadrons, creating an overwhelming force.

If you can destroy the enemy's Corvette Facilities, Platform Controllers, and Fighter Facilities, you're ensuring that he cannot produce any Anti-Fighter weaponry like Corvette Gunships or Interceptors. Be vigilant in taking out these subsystems. If even a few Gun Platforms or Corvette Gunships appear, your Fighters will lose their wingmen, and quickly. So don't let this happen.

By having the constant swarm of enemy Fighters always gaining strength in numbers, you can eventually start taking out Resource Collectors and other critical subsystems. Once you have about 10–15 unopposed squads flying around the enemy Mothership (and Carrier), focus on getting a Destroyer to put the nail in the coffin.

Recommended Build Orders

1. Immediately build two Resource Collectors in the Mothership and two in the Carrier.
 - a. Ensure all Resource Collectors are harvesting at all times. When they initially come out of the Mothership, immediately give each one a harvest order.
2. 00:01:15: All four Resource Collectors should be built.
3. 00:01:15: Build two Fighter Facilities, one in the Mothership and one in the Carrier
 - a. If this is a medium-resource (3,000 RU start) or high-resource (10,000 RU start) game, build the two Fighter Facilities at the start of the game. Also, these times are for a low resource game. Start on high or medium to get everything a lot faster.
4. 00:01:18: Build a Research Module while the Fighter Facilities are building at the Mothership.
5. 00:02:30: Fighter Facilities should be completed.

6. 00:02:31: Queue up twelve fighters—six in the Mothership and six in the Carrier.



Fig. Heat 1. Six Fighters queued up in the Mothership.

7. Launch command: Make your ships stay docked so the enemy doesn't know you are creating a lot of Interceptors.

- a. Enable auto-launch as soon as the sixth squad is at 95 percent complete.



Fig. Heat 2. Two Fighters are ready to have auto-launch pressed and be released for the kill.

- b. If the Vaygr research Bombers, only research Lance Fighters if they have Corvettes.
8. 00:05:00 or less: Attack with six squads of Interceptors.
9. Queue up two squads of Bombers in the Mothership and two squads in the Carrier.
- a. Research Improved Bombs upgrade; this enables you to kill enemy subsystems faster.
10. Create a rally point from your Carrier and Mothership so that their newly created units move to the enemy's location.

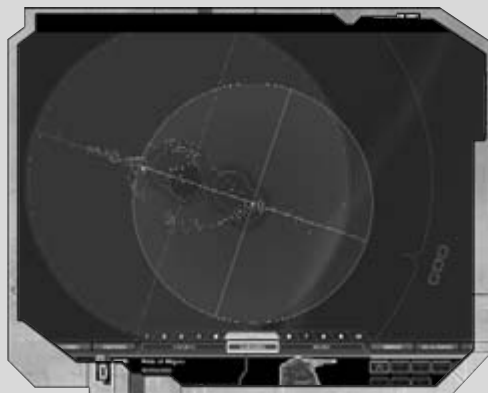


Fig. Heat 3. Notice that the rally point at position one is near the enemy asteroid packet.

11. Attack enemy ships and Resource Collectors with your Interceptors and Bombers.



Fig. Heat 4. Fighters are destroying enemy Resource Collectors.

TIP

If at pop cap and you have Fighter squads with only one of five units, scuttle them so a new unit with full firepower can be produced and join the battle. This is faster than sending the unit back to be repaired and then back to battle.

TIP

Only execute this strategy on maps where your enemy is less than 30 km away. You may be able to catch enemies on larger maps if they build up too long, but the travel distances enable them to have an effective defense by the time you strike.

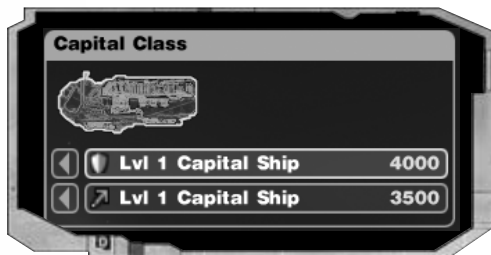


Fig. 11-10. Vaygr ship upgrades affect many ships but come at a high cost.

TIP

Upgrades should be the first thing you pause or cancel when you are running low on money and can't build.

Adapting Your Strategy to the Tactical Situation

SMALL MAPS

Your goal on a small map should be to deliver a crippling blow to your opponent early in the game. Take out production or research subsystems, or even a Mobile Refinery. Even if you don't destroy them right away, this approach builds momentum toward your eventual victory.

LARGE MAPS

Large maps give you time to build up. It's also easier to defend against rush attacks—the travel times are so large that you can easily have a superior defense force ready.

Hyperspace becomes a key strategy on large maps. Build Gravity Wells to protect important areas like your Mothership or a core resource op. You also have the time and space to invest in extensive resource ops.

TIP

Toward the end of the game, when you've all but destroyed your opponent, use the Scout "Ping" ability to quickly locate those elusive last ships. Hyperspace-equipped Battlecruisers are fantastic for mopping up.

FREE-FOR-ALLS

In these tactical situations, winning the first battle can often lose you the war. You can finish off one opponent only to find yourself in another's sights before you've had a chance to rebuild.

In the early stages—before anyone has been knocked out—you must avoid getting into large battles. Free-for-alls are all about positioning and timing.

You should look for any opportunity to attack without exposing yourself. Better still, attack someone who can't retaliate. The key is to kick opponents when they are down.

Everybody's Friend

It's sneaky, but it works. In a free-for-all game, send a message to *everyone* offering to ally with them. Tell them that you're sending the message to them privately, and instruct them to respond privately as well. If you can pull it off, you'll get to see the entire map—courtesy of your "allies." Suggest joint attacks, but don't send your ships in. ["I was just attacked and lost my ships" works great as an excuse—nobody can see that your launch bays are full.] You can't carry this charade through to game's end, but it *does* allow you to build up quickly.

TEAM GAMES

Team strategies that involve more than just coordinated attacks are very difficult to pull off and require a lot of planning. The map is a huge factor in this. On small maps, ganging up on opponents may be the best option.

On larger maps, strategies like splitting the tech tree and having one player act as a banker can work, since there's enough time for these plans to pay off.

Sneak Attacks

Hyperspacing, cloaking, and using the 3D space are the best ways of doing sneak attacks. Fortunately,

good scouting and having some Proximity Sensors and Gravity Well subsystems can give you enough warning to defend against these attacks.



Fig. 11-11. A Gravity Well is your best insurance against "pop-up" attacks such as this.

Vaygr Advantages

The Vaygr Fleet is similar to the Hiigaran Navy in most ways, aside from its appearance. However, there are a few ships available to the Vaygr Fleet that have unique strengths one wouldn't expect after having only played as the Hiigarans throughout the single-player campaign. Now that we're discussing the multiplayer game, we've included a section that elaborates on five ships that can be used to surprise and overpower an unsuspecting enemy in a multiplayer game.

LANCE FIGHTERS

Hiigaran Interceptors and Bombers are solid core units for early game attacks and harassment, but Corvettes very quickly outclass them. The Vaygr have a unique early-game advantage, however, which can make for deadly ambushes and surprises on opponents who consider themselves well protected with Gunships and Pulsar Gunships: the Lance Fighter.



Fig. 11-12. Lance Fighters reverse an ambush on Anti-Fighter Gunship Corvettes.

Lance Fighters are cheap, fast, fighter-class ships that are available with a simple Fighter Facility and inexpensive research upgrade. They are built specifically to destroy the larger, stronger Corvettes, and do so with ease. A combination of well-coordinated Lance Fighters, Assault Fighters, and Bombers can be a very effective early-to-mid-game combination, able to handle any threat your opponent presents.

COMMAND CORVETTES

For resource operations and Capital Ship defenses, all players have the ability to construct Fire Towers, granting their nearby craft improved accuracy and thus firepower. The Vaygr enjoy this advantage on offense as well with the fast-moving Command Corvette.

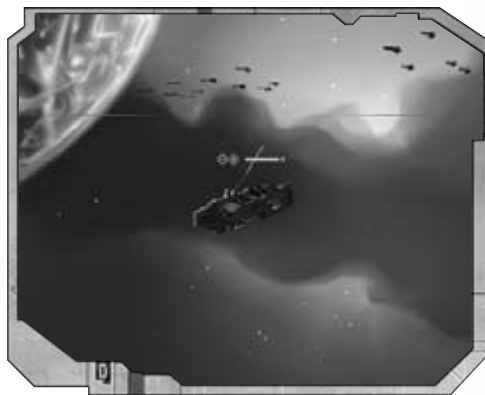


Fig. 11-13. Vaygr craft hold close formation near a Command Corvette to improve their firepower.

This midgame unit remains valuable throughout the game, granting an attack bonus to all friendly ships within its command radius. Be cautious when in skirmishes against the CPU, as the AI tends to consider Command Corvettes a high-priority target.

HEAVY MISSILE FRIGATES



Fig. 11-14. Heavy Missile Frigates bomb a Shipyard from afar.

The basic Vaygr Frigate-class vessel, the Heavy Missile Frigate is more specialized than it's Hiigaran counterpart. While not as effective in fending off smaller attackers, the Heavy Missile Frigate packs a far more lethal punch against Capital Ships. It's inexpensive to build and available by researching Frigates early. An attack on the enemy's undefended Flagship or Mothership with four Heavy Missile Frigates will often go uncontested until it's too late.

HYPERSPACE GATES

Though not actual ships in their own right, Hyperspace Gates deserve special mention. They allow the Vaygr to provide instantaneous transport for even the smallest of their craft to any location on the map—provided you can first get an exit gate established there.

Building a staging point on an unexpected flank of your opponent's base can allow for a lethal ambush or pincer attack.



Fig. 11-15. Vaygr Missile Corvettes pass through a Hyperspace Gate.

BATTLECRUISERS

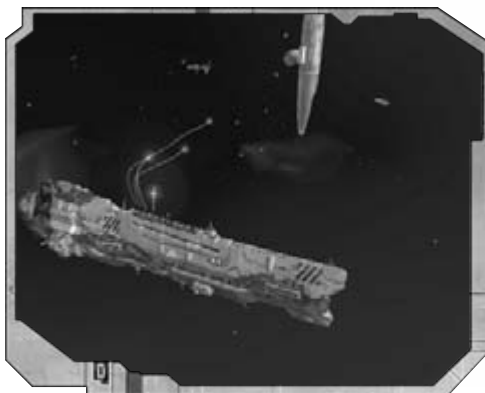


Fig. 11-16. A Battlecruiser engages a Mothership at standoff range.

The Vaygr endgame unit is just as formidable as the Hiigaran equivalent, but with a few special differences. Missile launchers located along the top of the vessel deliver the Vaygr Battlecruiser's primary punch. These provide heavy-bore damage capability with full coverage. Compare this to the Hiigaran Battlecruiser, which orients itself to its target before it can fire its heavy Ion Cannons. The Vaygr Battlecruiser's edge in these engagements can make a surprising difference. It also permits the Vaygr heavyweight to strafe Capital Ships, remaining mobile while dealing heavy damage.

CHAPTER 12: MULTIPLAYER MAPS

A HUMAN OPPONENT

A human opponent is the only worthy adversary. Far more cunning than the computer opponent, real people stop at nothing to decimate your fleet on the battlefield. This chapter covers the many different battlefields (multiplayer maps) that ship with the game, giving you the opportunity to understand the environment you're playing in before a fight to the death.

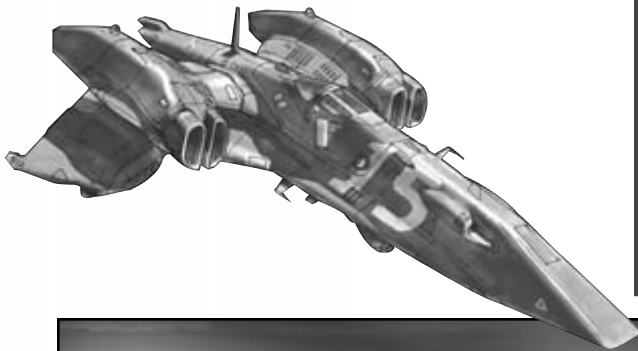
Map Legends

Latch Points: Refer to the number of places that a Resource Collector can attach to an asteroid and begin harvesting. Obviously, this is a crucial factor when determining how many RUs per minute you should be harvesting.

Base: Refers to the number of latch points at your starting position.

Expansion: Refers to the number of latch points at your closest resource operation expansion location (that is, your secondary resourcing location).

Contested: Refers to a location of resources where the operation is easily challenged, like in the middle of the map.

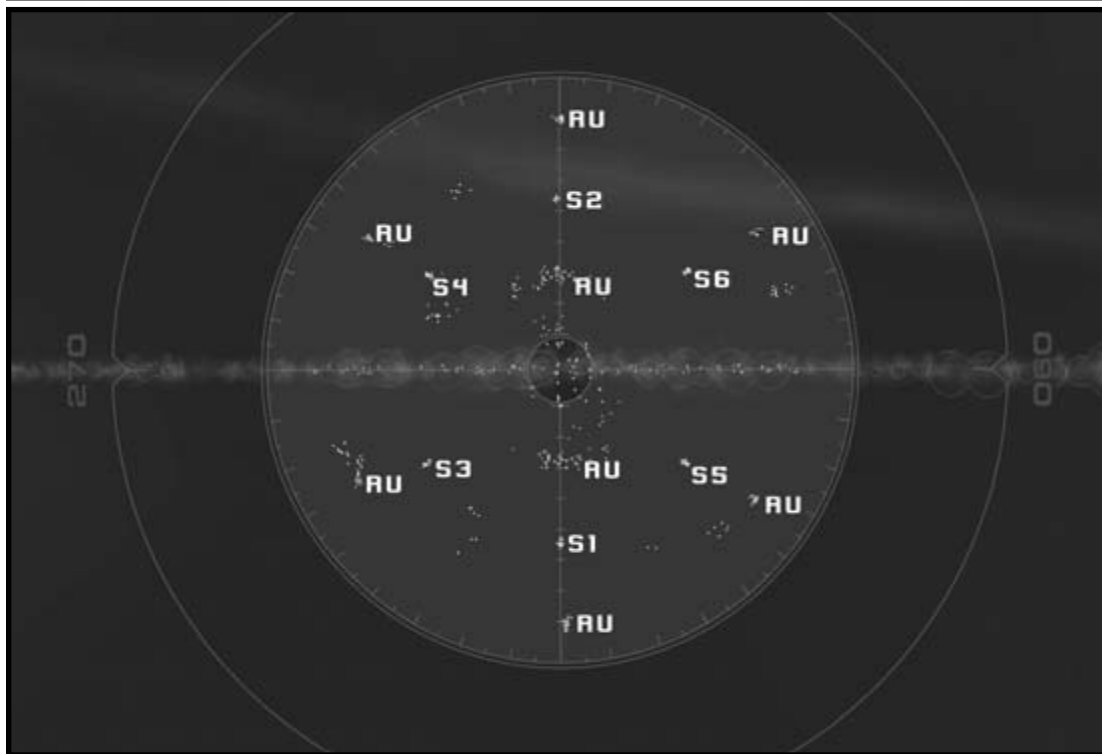


NOTE In the following maps, RU indicates a concentrated Resource Pocket, while S1–S6 indicates the starting positions of individual players. Maps that don't indicate RU have evenly distributed RUs throughout the map.





Terah: Six Player



Total Latch Points: 74 Latch Points

Base: 4 Latch Points

Expansion: 5 Latch Points

Contested: 20 Latch Points

Distance to Closest Enemy: 28 km

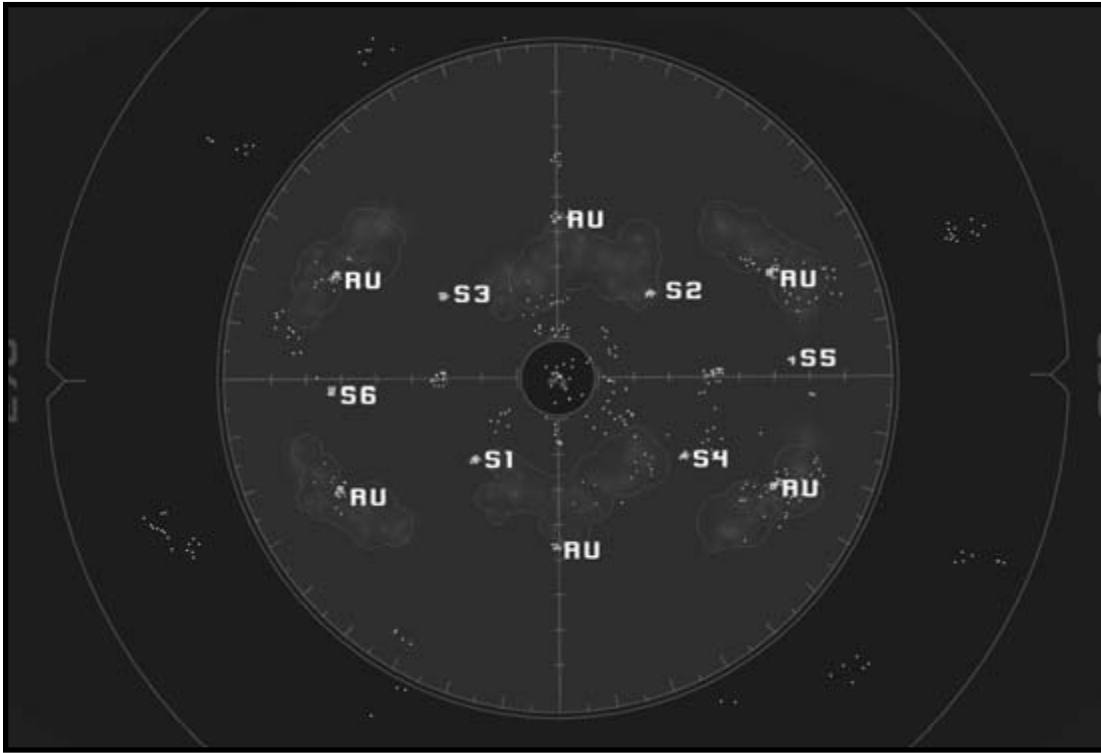
In this battlefield, beware of the middle nebula. Any Strikecraft die quickly with exposure to the radiation.

Expand early with your Carrier and try using Fighters to defend against subsystem attacks by enemy Bombers. Focus on building at least 10 Resource Collectors to support your strategy over the long run. An investment in your economy can power you to victory by funding the construction of many Frigates and Destroyers. These ships are the most effective against worthy opponents.

TIP

Use hyperspace sneak attacks to fight enemies on the other side of the nebula. Since the distances between enemies tend to be pretty far, this surprise tactic works well. It also protects your ships from the dangers of the nebula.

Sarum Dust Clouds: Six Player



Total Latch Points: 81 Latch Points

Base: 4 Latch Points

Expansion: 0 Latch Points

Contested: 57 Latch Points

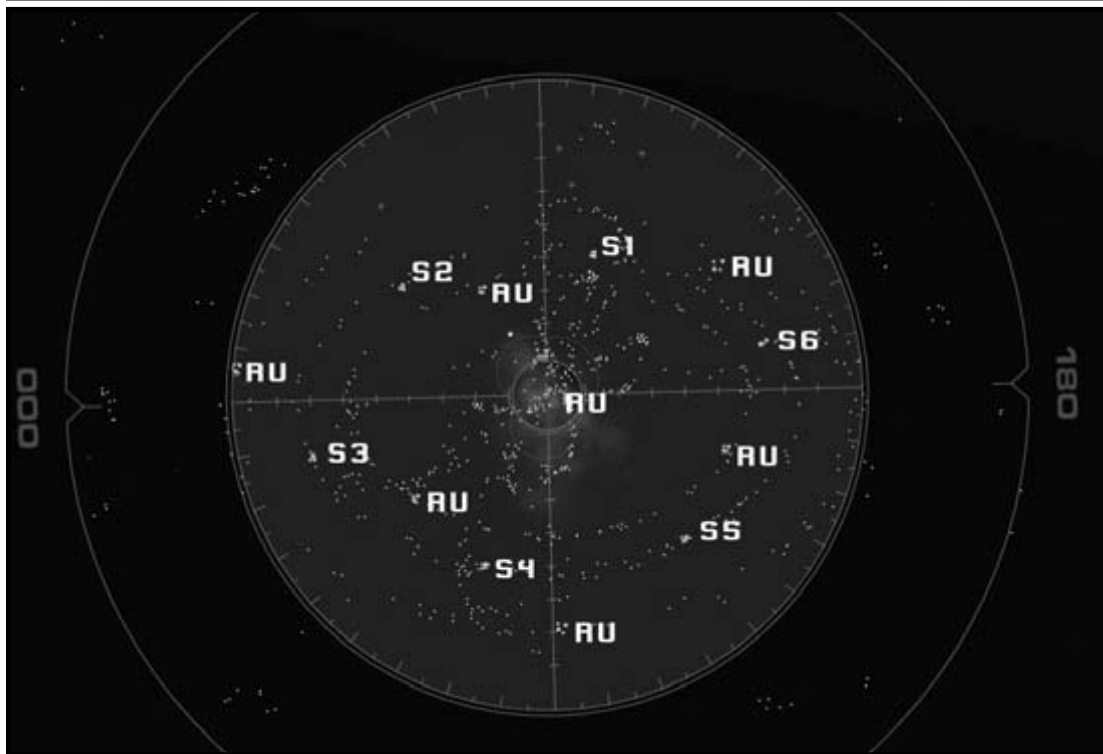
Distance to Closest Enemy: 17 km

Dust clouds have numerous advantages. They're excellent for hiding your fleet, especially Carriers laden with Strikecraft poised for attack. Use the dust clouds strategically to spy on your enemy with Probes. Try hiding Bombers, and make surprise attacks on enemy subsystems. Leave them to lie in wait when the enemy defenses are weak.

The middle is rich in resources but difficult to defend. Make it a priority to protect by targeting anything that comes near it. It is equally close to your opponents, so only take it for your own if you are confident that your defenses will prevail. Otherwise, build smaller operations on the fringes of the map and build up your fleet for a fatal strike in the late game.



Imposed Cosmos: Six Player



Total Latch Points: 94 Latch Points

Base: 6 Latch Points

Expansion: 6 Latch Points

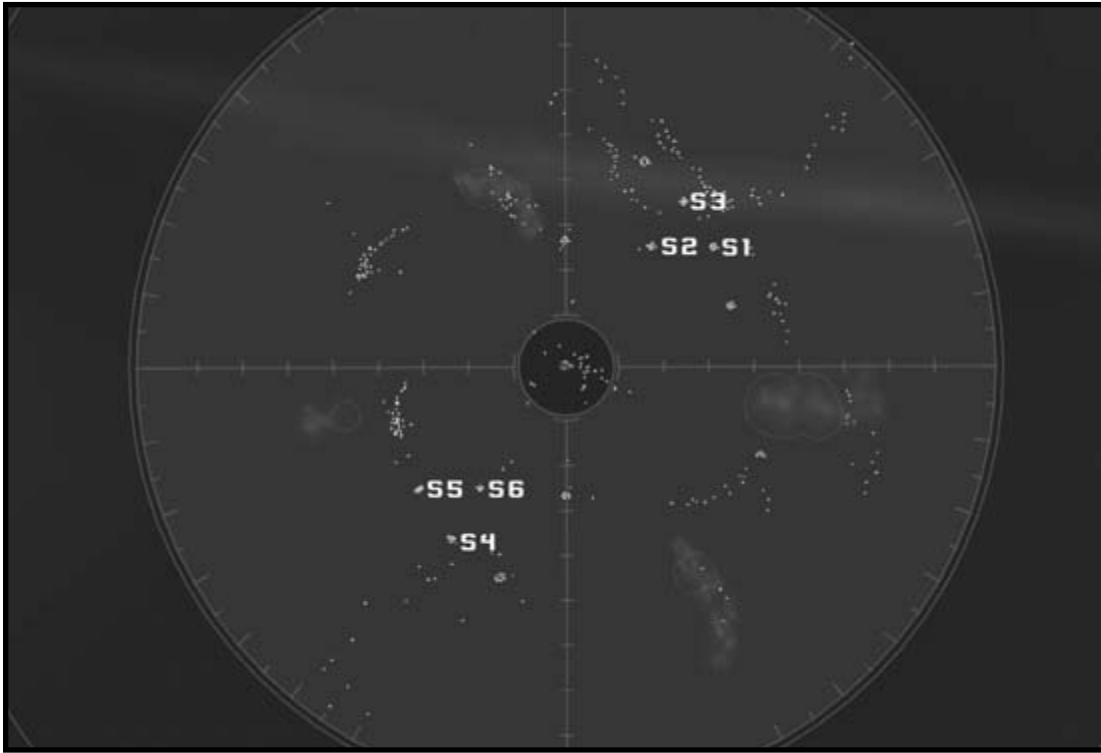
Contested: 22 Latch Points

Distance to Closest Enemy: 24 km

Imposed Cosmos is truly a 3D map. Asteroid expansions are located above, below, and between you and the enemy. Because of the size and depth of the map, ensure you send Probes to the high and low resource pockets; you definitely do not want your enemy harvesting without your knowing. With a lot of scouting, you can use the size and 3D nature of the map to your advantage.

To ensure late game victory on the Imposed Cosmos battlefield, use groups of fast-moving Strikecraft to stop your enemy from expanding. Attack expansion points, then fly away when superior forces show up. Also, strategically attach Gravity Well subsystems to your attacking Battlecruisers or supporting Carrier. This ensures that your enemies cannot flee via hyperspace when your fleet is ravaging them.

Crimson Bond: Six Player



Total Latch Points: 75 Latch Points

Base: 5 Latch Points

Expansion: 3–5 Latch Points

Contested: 21 Latch Points

Distance to Closest Enemy: 10–40 km

This is a great three-on-three map when fixed positions are turned on. The default settings place you within supporting range of your allies and at a safe distance from your enemies.

An effective early game three-on-three strategy on Crimson Bond is for two allied players to go for a Destroyer gambit while the other ally provides defense with a constant production of Interceptors and platforms. Once your Destroyers emerge from the Mothership, hyperspace them into the enemy's base in tandem with an allied Carrier full of Strikecraft. The Strikecraft support the Destroyers while they lay waste to the enemy Mothership and resourcing operations.



Silum Training Grounds: Five Player



Total Latch Points: 60 Latch Points

Base: 4 Latch Points

Expansion: 4 Latch Points

Contested: 20 Latch Points

Distance to Closest Enemy: 20 km

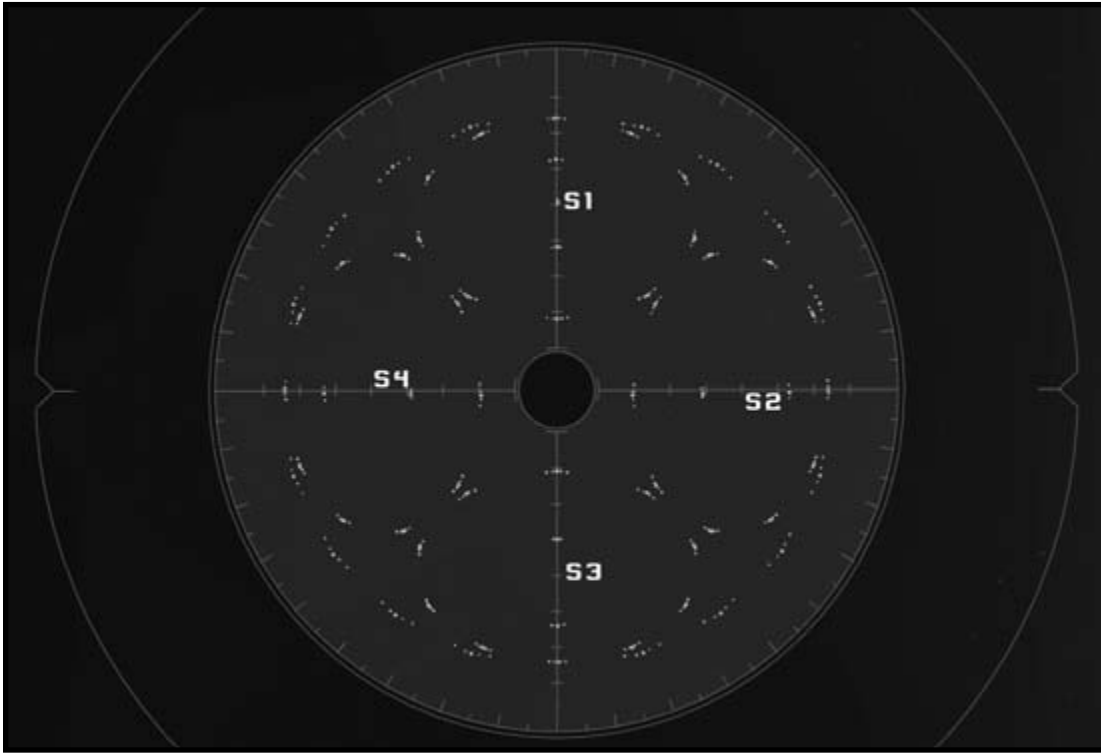
This is a good five-player "free-for-all" map. All of the expansion resources are contested, so you need a Scout to recon enemy positions and activities. If you don't, you'll end up fighting over the same pocket of resources, which is usually a waste of time and money. It is folly to attempt to take over a spot that your enemy already controls.

TIP

Try staying out of battle as long as possible while researching upgrades and building fleets of Capital Ships and Frigates.

You can also play this map for a two-on-two team game, with the unoccupied base left as a bonus for whichever team can get it first. The limited amount of RUs in the asteroid pockets makes expanding especially important.

Rings of Hraal: Four Player



Total Latch Points: 128 Latch Points

Base: 4 Latch Points

Expansion: 20 Latch Points
[Very dispersed in groups of 2]

Contested: 32 Latch Points
[Very dispersed in groups of 2]

Distance to Closest Enemy: 27 km

Asteroids are scattered everywhere on this battlefield, so try using Mobile Refineries to harvest effectively.

Focus on Strikecraft to harass enemies and defend your scattered resource operations. Strikecraft are more mobile than Frigates and Capital Ships, allowing you to defend more points quickly and easily.

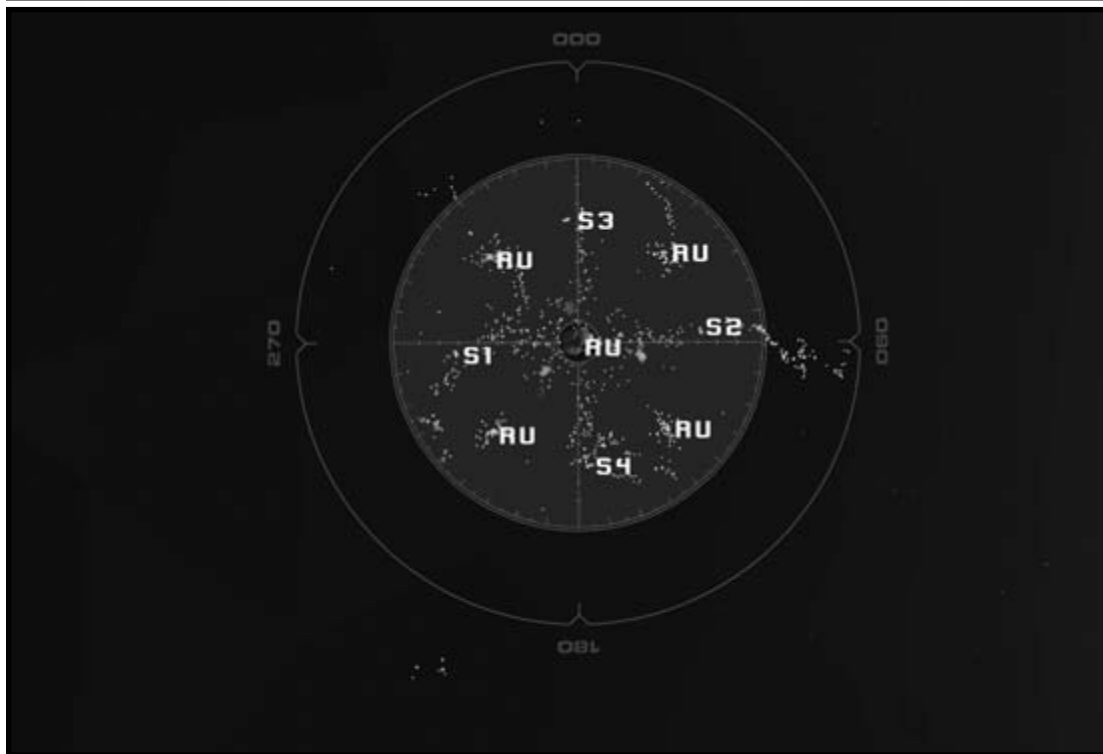
TIP

Be sure to have Probes and Scouts littered across the map so you can cut off enemy forces before they start laying waste to your far-flung, vulnerable resource operations.

Try to take the resource points to the left and right of your base, where there are four asteroids in close proximity. Place a Mobile Refinery and your Carrier nearby. This gives you a spot that is easy to defend while affording you a modest amount of resources.



Kharam Wreck: Four Player



Total Latch Points: 42 Latch Points

Base: 4 Latch Points

Expansion: 5 Latch Points

Contested: 6 Latch Points

Distance to Closest Enemy: 20 km

If you're trying an early game strategy, expand with your Carrier. Your initial resource pocket only has four latch points and enables you to build only a small fleet. You need the additional expansion to build up a sizable force. Taking this early is key to victory.

In the late game, don't let the enemy take the middle resource pocket. Once you've exhausted your expansion, it's a fight over the middle that decides who will have more RUs at their disposal.

Dante's Requiem: Three Player



Total Latch Points: 46 Latch Points

Base: 3 Latch Points

Expansion: 8 Latch Points

Contested: 13 Latch Points

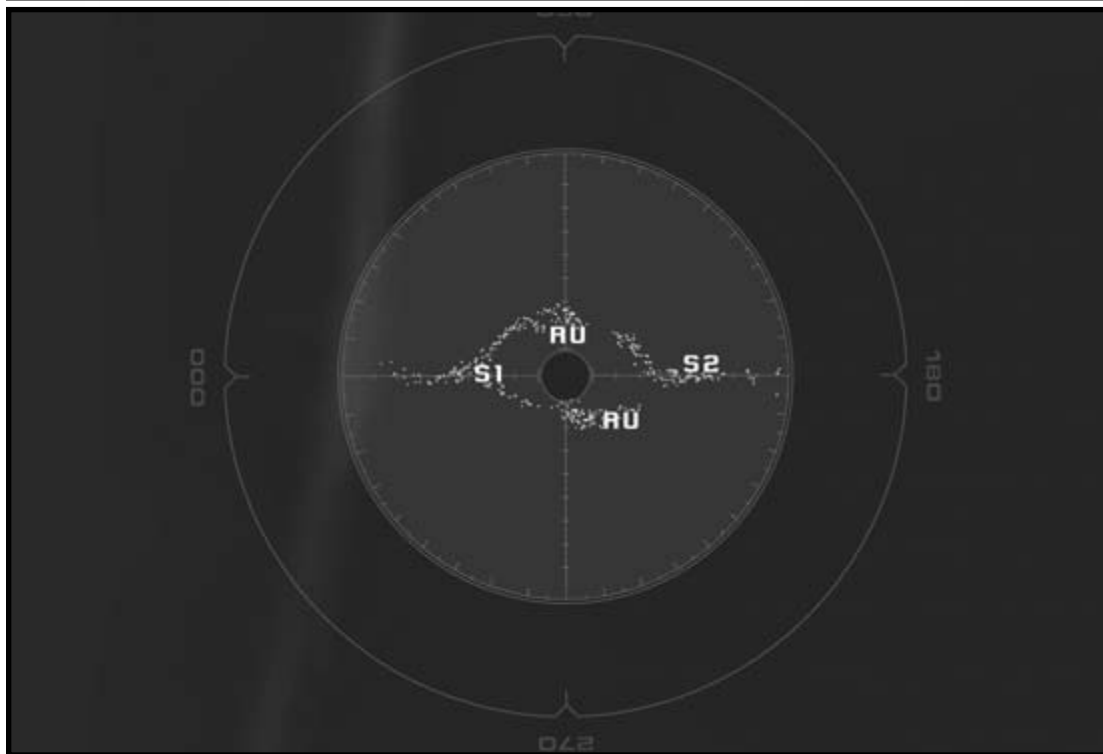
Distance to Closest Enemy: 30 km

Dante's Requiem is perfect for three-player free-for-alls. Make sure you quickly collect the salvage beside your Mothership; this can help speed up your initial production. Send your Mothership to one of the larger resource pockets, as the nearest one only needs a Carrier to support the number of latch points available to your collectors.

The center of the map contains a lot of resources. Controlling these can give you an economic edge, as well as the ability to build lots of Capital Ships. However, it also makes you a target for your enemies. People won't stand idly by while you out-harvest everyone.



Shield: Two Player



Total Latch Points: 24 Latch Points

Base: 6 Latch Points

Expansion: 6 Latch Points

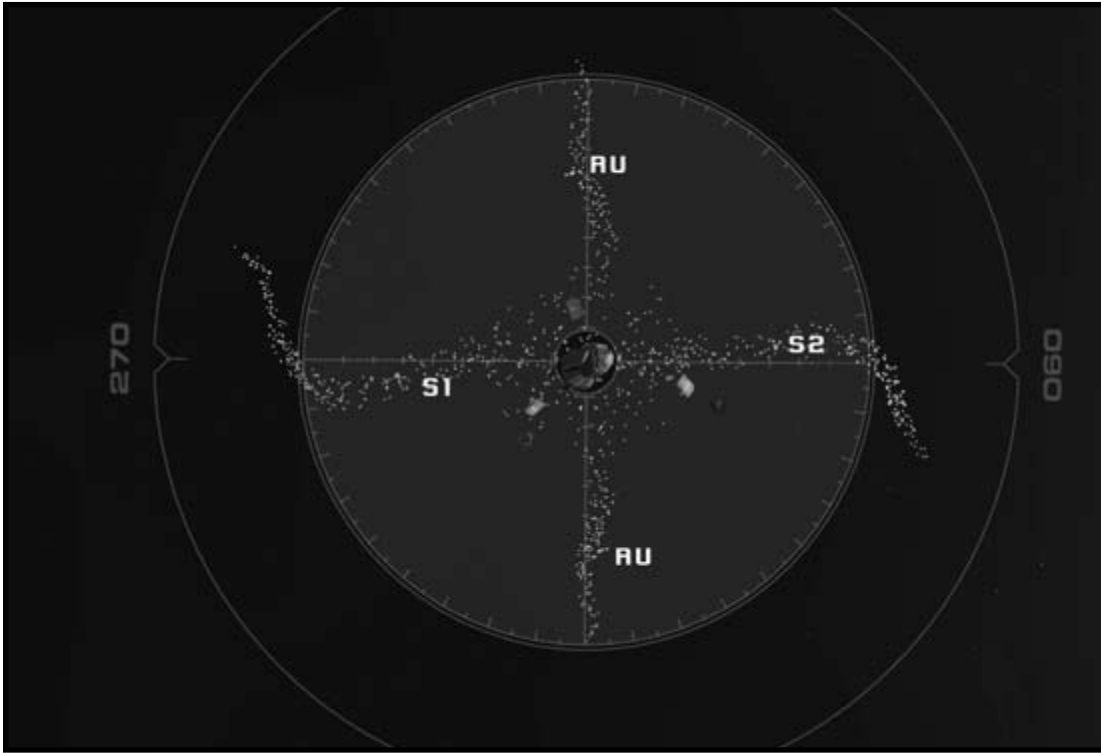
Contested: 0 Latch Points

Distance to Closest Enemy: 22 km

This is a very aggressive one-on-one map. Your closest expansion is located between you and your enemy. You must focus early on building Strikecraft and attempt to take out the enemy's expansion as quickly as you can. Because of the proximity of the enemy on this map, you can be sure it'll be a fight from the beginning. So keep building those Strikecraft and maintain pressure on your opponent.

Alternatively, since there are not many places your enemy can attack without your knowing it, try building a ton of platforms. Defend your Mothership while going up the research tree to Battlecruisers. Just make sure you have the necessary complement of platforms and support them with Pulsar Corvettes.

Kharam Wreck: Two Player



Total Latch Points: 22 Latch Points

Base: 4 Latch Points

Expansion: 4 Latch Points

Contested: 6 Latch Points

Distance to Closest Enemy: 25 km

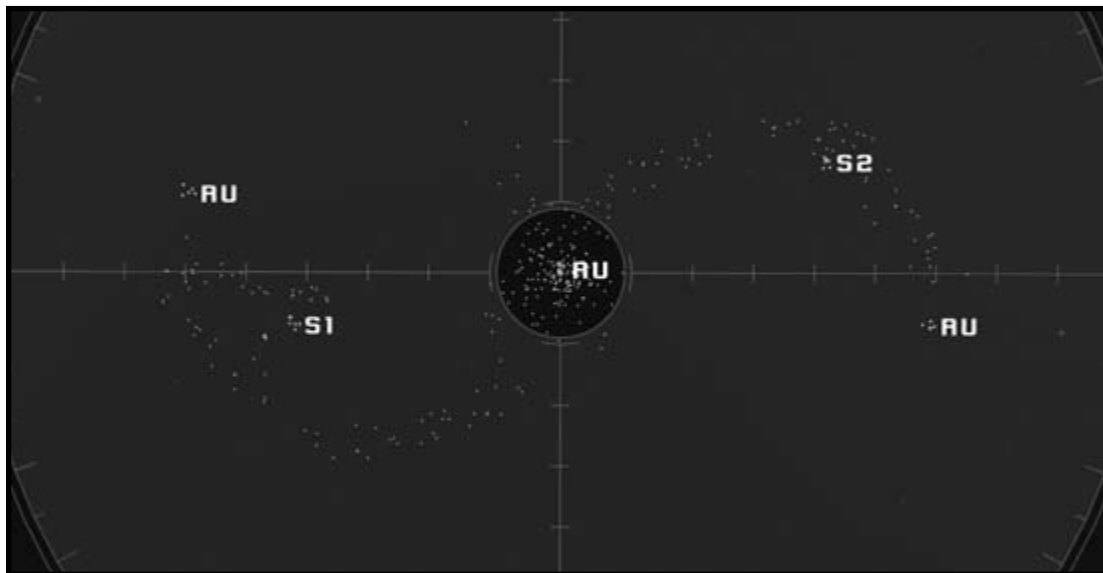
Since there aren't many resources on Kharam Wreck, it is a good map to expand by building Strikecraft. Focus spending your RUs on building Strikecraft, don't invest in research or upgrades. Create an overwhelming force of Fighters and Corvettes and then attack the enemy Mothership. With the swarm of Strikecraft, strategically destroy subsystems with your Bombers. Your enemy will have difficulty pinpointing the Bombers amongst your swarm should you have free reign on subsystem annihilation.

TIP

Use your Mothership to take the middle resource pocket right off the bat. It's a gamble that can payoff big when you have more resources coming in than your enemy!



Jadeth: Two Player



Total Latch Points: 32 Latch Points

Base: 7 Latch Points

Expansion: 5 Latch Points

Contested: 8 Latch Points

Distance to Closest Enemy: 68 km

Jadeth is a very large map. Try using hyperspace to your advantage in surprise attacks. Alternatively, use Gravity Well Generators to prevent the enemy from hyperspacing on top of your Mothership in the same way. Expand to the middle and make that your base of operations. That way, you'll out-resource your opponent and have less distance to travel when trying to attack the enemy Mothership.

TIP

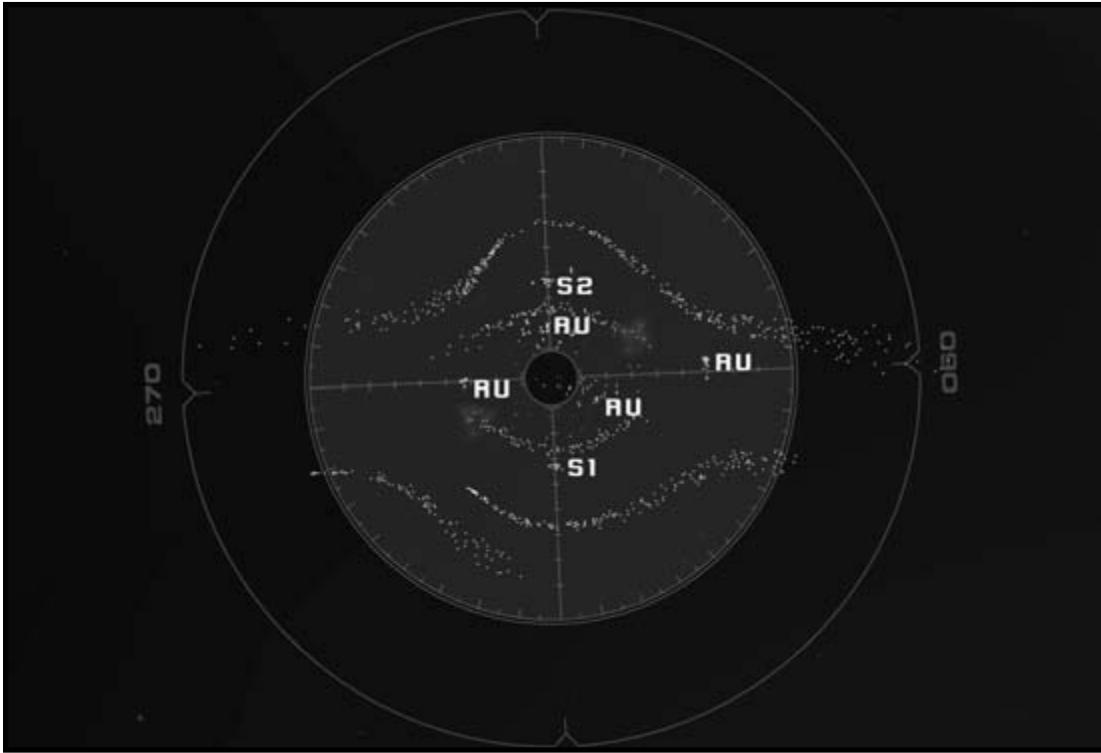
Early on, try hyperspacing a Carrier full of Strikecraft near your enemy's Mothership. Proceed to flood the enemy with Strikecraft produced by the Carrier that is just out of range of enemy detection. Attack the Mothership's Fighter Facility Subsystem, then repeat on the resourcing operations.

Try building a Gravity Well Generator on your Carrier. Any enemy attempts to hyperspace into your base will hit the edge of the effect of the Gravity Well. Move your Carrier over the enemy fleet. Gravity Well Generators work so that nothing can hyperspace into the area of effect, and any enemy unit within the area of effect cannot hyperspace out. So keep your Carrier close enough to the enemy ships, and they will not be able to retreat. This enables you to attack their Mothership with impunity.

Use your Mothership Strikegroup, a Mothership with a Hyperspace Module attached, and Resource Collectors of various types. Then hyperspace the fully loaded Mothership into the enemy base. Unload everything from the Mothership and start harvesting the enemy's asteroids with your Resource Collectors. Attack the critical enemy units with your Strikecraft and take out Resource Collectors and subsystems as normal. This will have the enemy up in arms and down in spirit.

Additional strategy is to have a Cloaking Module on your Carrier, enabling it to more safely keep the Gravity Well over the top of the enemy group.

Hostilities End: Two Player



Total Latch Points: 38 Latch Points

Base: 8 Latch Points

Expansion: 0 Latch Points

Contested: 22 Latch Points

Distance to Closest Enemy: 27 km

Don't forget about the high and low resource pockets, as this is a true 3D map. These spots tend to get overlooked, and sometimes you can get away with just sending a Mobile Refinery with six Resource Collectors. If it is never noticed, it will be a very productive operation.

Make sure you get a second Carrier or a Shipyard pretty early to spend all the RUs you accumulate. Leave your Mothership and initial Carrier at your base, and get 16 Resource Collectors harvesting as soon as you can. This ensures a late victory through researching and building a more formidable fleet.

Conclusion

Now that you have an inside look at the maps, as well as the suggested strategies for each map, we expect to see you online, destroying every opponent and claiming these maps as your own.





APPENDIX A: HIIGARAN AND VAYGR SHIP LIST

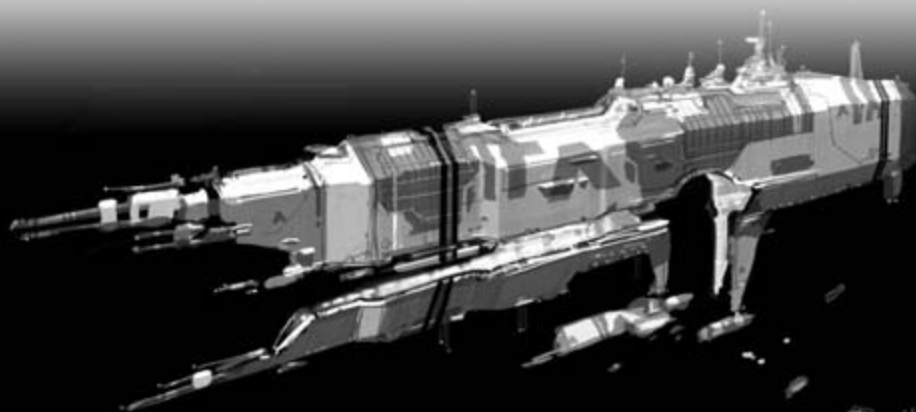
Hiigaran

SHIP	ROLE	SPEED	ATTACK	ARMOR
Carrier	Ship production	75	40	80,000
[Fighter] Interceptor	Anti-Fighter	325	36	150
[Fighter] Bomber	Anti-Capital Ship Fighter	260	439	150
[Corvette] Gunship	Anti-Fighter	215	56	1,200
[Corvette] Pulsar Gunship	Anti-Corvette	215	54	1,200
Minelayer Corvette	Deploys and Clears Mines	215	48	400
Torpedo Frigate	Corvette Killer	161	305	12,000
Defense Field Frigate	Defense Field that stops most attacks	161	17	18,000
Flak Frigate	Anti-Fighter	161	50	16,000
Ion Frigate	Anti-Frigate	150	315	16,000
Marine Frigate	Allows you to capture enemy ships	230	80	18,000
Destroyer	Anti-Frigate	480	9	85,000
Battlecruiser	Super Capital Ship	69	5,200	240,000
Resource Collector	Collect materials for processing into RUs	276	0	2,000
Mobile Refinery	Resource Collector drop-off point	226	80	18,000
Probe	Single-burn reconnaissance unit	600	0	100
Proximity Sensor	Cloak detector	600	0	100
Gun Platform	Anti-Fighter defensive structure	200	32	5,000
Ion Cannon Platform	Anti-Frigate defensive structure	200	167	5,000
Sensor Distortion Probe	Disrupts enemy sensors	600	0	100
Shipyard	Ship production	15	120	160,000
Mothership	Ship production	40	120	200,000

Appendix A: Hiigaran and Vaygr Ship List

Vaygr

SHIP	ROLE	SPEED	ATTACK	ARMOR
Carrier	Ship production	260	43	150
[Fighter] Assault Craft	Anti-Fighter	325	30	210
[Fighter] Lance Fighter	Anti-Corvette	260	43	150
[Fighter] Bomber	Anti-Capital Ship	260	332	180
Laser Corvette	Anti-Capital Ship	215	350	1,600
Minelayer Corvette	Anti-Frigate	215	48	400
Missile Corvette	Anti-Corvette	215	26	1,600
Command Corvette	Attack bonus to ships in radius	215	0	600
Assault Frigate	Anti-Fighter	161	127	16,000
Shipyards	Ship production	15	550	160,000
Missile Frigate	Anti-Frigate	150	351	16,000
Infiltration Frigate	Allows you to capture enemy ships	230	53	18,000
Destroyer	Anti-Frigate	115	1,100	85,000
Battlecruiser	Super Capital Ship	69	5,404	240,000
Resource Collector	Harvests RUs from asteroids	276	0	2,000
Probe	Single-burn reconnaissance unit	600	0	100
Proximity Sensor	Cloak detector	600	0	100
HS Gateway	Enables hyperspace between two points	600	0	16,000
Shipyards	Allows you to build Capital Ships	15	550	160,000
Mobile Refinery	Resource drop-off	226	80	18,000
Sensor Distortion	Distorts enemy sensors	600	0	100
Mothership	Ship production	40	120	200,000



V. Mothership

APPENDIX B: COMMAND KEYS

Selection

COMMAND	Key
Select	Left Click
Cancel Select	esc

Advanced Selection

COMMAND	Key
Select Next Idle RC	.
Band Select Military	A
Select All on Screen	caps lock

Orders

COMMAND	Key
Move	M
Guard	G
Attack	ctrl
Attack-Move	ctrl + A
Dock	D
Set Rally Point	P
Set Rally Point to Object	ctrl + P
Harvest	H
Hyperspace	J
Repair	Y
Waypoint	W
Stop	S
Special	.
Cloak	C
Defense Field Frigate	T

Orders, continued

COMMAND	Key
EMP	E
Deploy Mines	N
Sensor Ping	X
Capture	U
Retire	ctrl + shift + X
Scuttle	ctrl + shift + S
Kamikaze	ctrl + shift + Z

Control Groups

COMMAND	Key
Assign Control Group	ctrl + 1 - 0
Unassign Selected from Control Group	ctrl + min
Unassign All Control Groups	ctrl + shift + min



Appendix B: Command Keys

Taskbar

COMMAND	Key
Build Manager	B
Research Manager	R
Sensor Manager	space
Launch Manager	L
Events	V
Objectives	O
Diplomacy	K
Queue	Q
Fleet Info	I
Go to Last Event	NUM PAD 0

Tactics and Formations

COMMAND	Key
Agro Tactics	F4
Pos Tactics	F2
Def Tactics	F3
Strikegroup 1	F5
Strikegroup 2	F6
Strikegroup 3	F7
Disband Strike	F8

Camera

COMMAND	Key
Focus	F
Pan Forward	↑
Pan Back	↓
Pan Left	←
Pan Right	→
Pan Up	insert
Pan Down	delete
Previous Focus	page up
Last Focus	page down
Focus on Build Capable Ships	home
Select Focus	alt + LMB

Build and Research

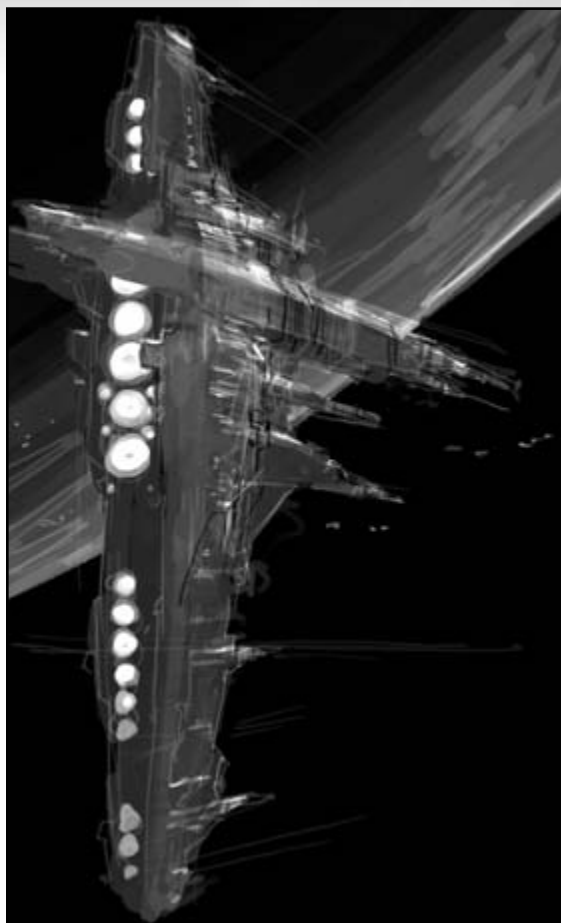
COMMAND	Key
Build-Utility Class	alt + T
Build/Subsystem-Subsystem Modules	alt + D
Build-Subsystem Sensors	alt + Q
Build-Fighter	alt + F
Build/Corvette-Corvette	alt + C
Build/Frigate-Frigate	alt + R
Build/Capital-Capital	alt + A
Build/Platform-Platform	alt + W
Build Option 1	alt + 1
Build Option 2	alt + 2
Build Option 3	alt + 3
Build Option 4	alt + 4
Build Option 5	alt + 5
Build Option 6	alt + 6
Build Option 7	alt + 7
Build Option 8	alt + 8
Build Option 9	alt + 9
Cancel Build	alt + X
Pause Build	alt + E
Cancel Subsystem Build	alt + V
Pause Subsystem Build	alt + G

System

COMMAND	Key
Menu	F10
Quick Exit	alt + F4
Cycle UI	backspace
Toggle Tactical Overlays (TOs)	tab
Screenshot	print screen
Pause	pause
Chat	enter



APPENDIX C: THE HISTORY OF HIIGARA



PRELUDE TO THE END TIMES

Hiigaran History from 9525 GSY to 9625 GSY, outlines the period spanning the return of the Exiles to their Homeworld through to those events generally acknowledged as the beginning of the End Times.

The following is a chronicle of the events occurring after the return of the Hiigaran Exiles to their home, under the leadership and command of Karan S'Jet. The years immediately following landfall upon Hiigara were, without doubt, among the hardest the Exiles had faced. Those who had been brought to Hiigara in suspended animation, known as Sleepers, arose to the revelation that the planet upon which they had lived for so many years, Kharak, had been destroyed. The world they had been brought to, Hiigara, was their only chance for the future.

Colonization was a slow and difficult process. The Hiigaran Kiithid had expected to return to paradise, yet they instead found shattered cities left in the wake of the Taiidani evacuation, following the death of their emperor, Riesstiu IV the Second. However, they could ill afford to expend all of their resources upon rebuilding, given the presence of raiders, pirates, and Taiidan

still loyal to their fallen emperor—all of them eager to test Hiigara in its weakened state. Even political factions, including members of the Galactic Council, attempted to have Hiigara placed under their control, arguing that the Exiles could not possibly defend themselves and therefore required assistance from a larger government. All of these opponents, military and political, had underestimated the Exiles' resolve. Having lost so much and fought so hard, they were not prepared to fail at this stage. Against all who would take Hiigara from them, they stood firm.

Rebuilding

Slowly but surely, the shining cities of Hiigara were rebuilt. Libraries were unearthed, filled with documents detailing the ancient histories of the Hiigarans, their origins and ancestry. While often arcane and frequently contradictory or couched in the language of myth and legend, they were nonetheless a revelation for the Kushan people. Having lived so long without a true history, they now had access to archives detailing events of up to 6,000 years past. As a people so long without a history to call their own, the discovery of records outlining their past came as a welcome core on which to build their new future.

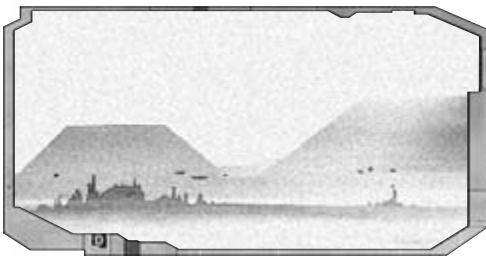


Fig. AC-01. The rebuilding begins.

More importantly, this history gave the Exiles hope. They were a proud people with an even prouder past, and no longer mere Exiles, but Hiigarans. They had faced endless trials and bitter enemies, and yet in the face of every challenge they had built a republic spanning nearly 40 worlds at its height. This growth had begun with

the introduction of hyperspace technology, approximately 4,000 years prior, and continued until the time of Exile.

THE GIFT OF HYPERSPACE

Among the facts detailed within the manuscripts was the role of the Bentusi in spreading the secrets of hyperspace across the vast expanses of space. It began with the Outer Rim Trade Routes, traversing hundreds of occupied worlds and bringing the Bentusi to each. With knowledge far exceeding that of any race they encountered, they were able to profit while spreading their wisdom. With each passing decade, more of the fledging races purchased the knowledge of hyperspace and charts of the Outer Rim Trade Routes, each thereby joining the Bentusi as unbound races among the stars.

Outer Rim Trade Routes

The trade routes established by the Bentusi cover a large number of worlds located on the outer rim of the galaxy. While the trade routes are thick and plentiful through the galaxy's outskirts, the number of routes that traverse the inner galactic sphere are far fewer, and none extend so far as the galactic core. In fact, Hiigara is among the closest to the core of those systems covered. Given the plentiful resources to be found in the inner sphere, it is curious that more of the trade routes do not cover these regions. Many explanations have been offered, but ultimately the Bentusi's reasons remain their own. Even now, few travel too close to the core—of those who do, many do not return.

What had once been a collection of isolated peoples, each believing itself to be the only life in



the galaxy, was now becoming a galactic community released from the shackles of sublight travel that once bound them. Trade, discussion, and war followed in the wake of the Bentusi. Yet the Bentusi withheld a key advantage from the races with which they had traded. Ever canny, it seemed they had not given up all of their secrets.

Short and Far Jumps

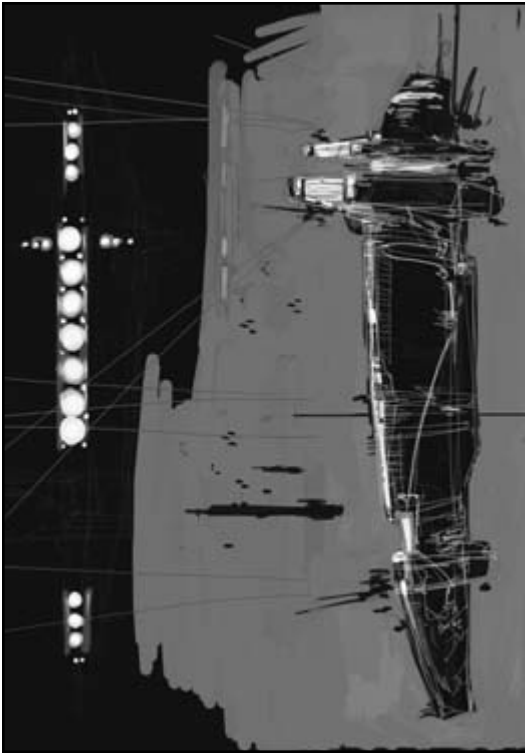
While many races now had access to hyperspace, the range and potential of their drives was limited. Despite being able to travel farther and faster than had even been conceived of in the days of sublight travel, there were still limits to the power of the drives derived from the Bentusi blueprints. These limits did not seem to apply to the Bentusi themselves, however. They were able to effortlessly travel the vast expanses of the galaxy in a mere blink of an eye—to Far Jump. Many races managed to reverse engineer the Short Jump technology provided by the Bentusi, and some even developed improvements and refinements upon the original designs. Yet even the finest of scientists granted that Far Jumping would require a level of power exponentially greater than that currently available. Thus, despite the many minds applied to the question, Far Jumping remained the exclusive privilege of the Bentusi.

CONFLICT AGAIN BESETS THE GALAXY

When the specter of war first raised its head, the Bentusi moved quickly into action. Many would-be conquerors were left impotent by the arrival of the Bentusi Flagship and its accompanying fleet. Never the first to fire, they were nonetheless capable of incapacitating entire armadas while taking almost no losses. Such extreme measures were rarely required, however, as few fleets would stand and fight when confronted with the power of the Bentusi Fleet. And any bold enough to do so did not fight for long. The Bentusi offered their trading partners a guarantee of peace, provided they remained peaceful in turn. Regardless, there were always some who would wage war upon their neighbors. After facing the overwhelming might of the Bentusi Fleet, however, none were foolish enough to make a second attempt.



Fig. AC-02. The Bentusi Fleet in action



Nearly 500 years passed with the Bentusi keeping the peace amongst the thousands of races with which they dealt. However, with communication and the exchange of diplomats amongst the planets came a growing murmur of dissent. The Bentusi, many said, had no right to dictate their wishes to an entire galaxy. Slowly this dissent grew, and in time it gained its focus.

An Uprising

Who the leader of this revolution was and how precisely he managed to coordinate such a bold uprising has been lost to the sands of time. Yet it would seem that over the course of several hours, thousands of wars began at once, scattered across the entire spread of the Outer Rim Trade Routes. While the Bentusi Fleet was effectively invincible and seemed able to cross the galaxy in mere moments, it could not be everywhere at once. Its greatest strength was its greatest weakness. Some assumed the Bentusi possessed many fleets, each headed by one of their Harbor Ships. In truth, only one Harbor Ship existed, and when confronted by galaxy-wide wars, the Bentusi faltered.

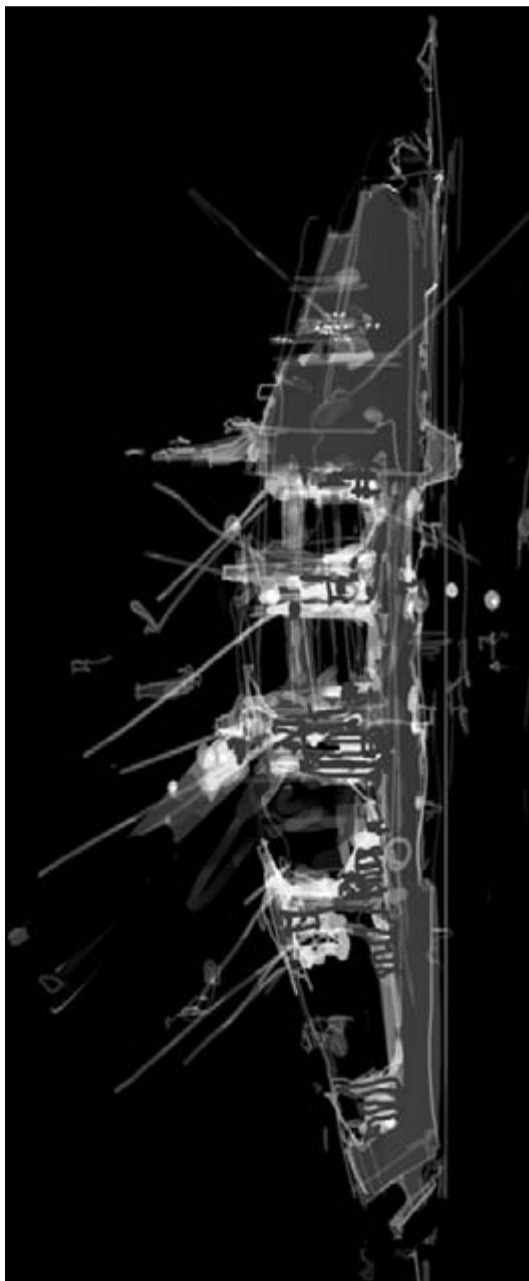
With outright war breaking out across the galaxy in hundreds of locations, there was little the Bentusi could do but deal with as many cases as they could and await the inevitable end of hostilities. When the chaos at last died down, many worlds had been conquered, and where there had once been hundreds of tiny individual governments now stood powerful empires spanning multiple worlds. Amongst these conquering empires was that of the Hiigarans, whose war fleets easily shattered their neighbors' defenses and brought them under the auspice of the Diamid, Hiigara's ruling council.

THE RISE OF THE GALACTIC COUNCIL

These new empires were able to make demands upon the Bentusi that would have been impossible as individual worlds. With the ability to disrupt the Bentusi trade routes ably demonstrated, they coerced the Bentusi into allowing them self-government, although there are some who contend this was always the Bentusi intent, and they were merely awaiting evidence the worlds were ready for independence. Regardless, the worlds maintained that a collective of rulers (many of them, ironically, dictators in fact if not in name) would be a fairer way for the fates of worlds to be decided, rather than the dictatorship that had been imposed by the Bentusi. Thus, through the trials of revolution, anarchy, and outright war, the Galactic Council was born, and the Hiigarans were amongst its founding members.

Also joining them amongst the 16 founding empires of the Galactic Council were the Taiidani, who had already been involved in a number of disputes with the Hiigaran people. Both located in the same area of space, they had built their respective empires by assimilating those worlds that surrounded them. However, those worlds on the borders between them had been bitterly fought over during the preceding battles, and their respective troops were still locked in combat above the skies and upon the ground of many. The ownership of these disputed planets was one of the first matters brought before the Council, and the resolution clearly favored the Taiidani. It

appeared the Taiidan representative had bribed, blackmailed, and in some cases even arranged the assassination of members of the Council in order to have the planets awarded to the Taiidani. Worse, a 30-light-year exclusion zone was instituted, into which the Hiigaran Fleet could not approach without the threat of serious reprisals from the Council.



THE SECOND CORE IS FOUND

Had circumstances differed, the Hiigarans would have been impotent in the face of the Council's edicts. Yet it was at this point that exploration within several previously uncharted sectors of the Great Wastelands unearthed an artifact that would prove the most important discovery in the history of Hiigara. A Hyperspace Core was found enclosed within a crystalline lattice, supported within the



heart of a shattered starship of awe-inspiring scale. This Hyperspace Core would provide the Hiigarans with the means to take their vengeance upon the Taiidan and recover those planets they considered rightfully theirs, yet this would ultimately also seal their fate as Exiles.

Fig. AC-03. Deep in the Great Wastelands the second Hyperspace Core is found.

With time, they unlocked the mysteries of the Hyperspace Core, clearly as powerful and capable as the Far Jumper utilized by the Bentusi. After extensive re-engineering of the core's containment unit, it was mounted into a newly constructed Flagship christened *Sajuuk's Wrath*. This single vessel harnessed more firepower than any other vessel in the Hiigaran Navy. And this, combined with its ability to Far Jump, represented the advantage required to both crush the Taiidan and allow the Hiigarans complete freedom unmatched by any other than the Bentusi.

Appendix C: The History of Hiigara

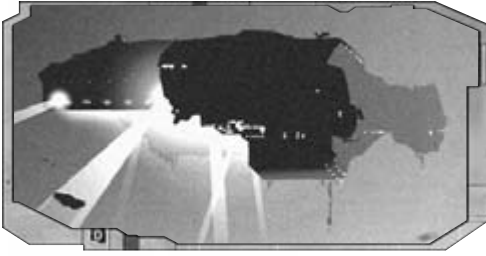


Fig. AC-04. Flagship of the Hiigaran Fleet, Sajuuk's Wrath.

Power Unleashed

Heeding the Bentusi example, every operational ship of the Hiigaran Navy was recalled and reformed into a single, massive fleet. Knowing that the bulk of the Taiidan Navy was currently poised at the Hiigaran border, the Hiigarans utilized the advantage of their Far Jump capabilities and struck deep behind the Taiidan lines. Able to strike the Taiidan patrols and garrisons they encountered with the full force of their entire fleet and then quickly move on, the Hiigarans demolished each Taiidan force they encountered. Before the first report of this destruction could reach Taiidan, the seat of the empire's power and home to the Imperial Palace, the Hiigaran fleet stood poised in orbit.

The Taiidan Elite Guard, realizing they could not hold against such overwhelming force, nevertheless threw themselves into the fray, hoping vainly to hold the line long enough for reinforcements to arrive. With the last barrier between *Sajuuk's Wrath* and the Imperial Palace of Taiidan removed, the Hiigarans maneuvered into high orbital position in order to begin planetary bombardment. A surgical strike was planned to cripple the Taiidan and therefore ensure they

would be unable to mount a retaliatory strike. The orbital missiles fell for a full day upon the Imperial Palace and every military facility upon Taiidan's surface. Satisfied that the Taiidan threat had been permanently neutralized, the Hiigaran Navy departed. Sixty-seven hours had passed between the departure of the fleet from Hiigara to its return.

Impossible Decisions

The outcome of this action and the potential reprisals from the Galactic Council had been exhaustively discussed in the Diamid before the attack was launched. After long debate, it had been decided that defiance of the Council's orders was the only option remaining to the Hiigaran people. Had the Taiidan been allowed to keep the worlds they had taken, they would soon encroach upon worlds deeper within the Hiigaran territories—if not by force, then via economic influence. It would then be but a matter of time before Hiigara was merely another subservient world under the banner of the Taiidan Empire.

Slow assimilation was considered unacceptable, especially given the harsh limitations placed upon the development of the Hiigaran military by the Council. It was clear that action needed to be taken immediately, or the glorious history of Hiigara would end here, a mere footnote for the future. The ancient core had evidently been handed to them by the will of Sajuuk, and it was his wish that Hiigara use the advantage it had been granted in order to snatch victory from the Taiidan while they least expected to be opposed.

The strike complete, and the core having proven more successful than even the most optimistic



general had hoped, the Hiigarans awaited the inevitable reaction from the Galactic Council. The Council was notoriously slow in its decision-making processes, a failing the Diamid had banked upon in the calculations for the war against the Taiidan. Given the usual timeframes of the Council, Hiigara would have time to dispatch the fleets upon their borders and reclaim the worlds that were rightfully theirs, presenting the Council with a fait accompli impossible to reverse. Surprisingly, the Council moved faster than anyone expected, and within days of the return of *Sajuuk's Wrath*, the Council had delivered its initial edict. The Hiigarans were to turn over their core to the Council's safekeeping, retreat from the disputed worlds immediately, and abandon all military vessels of the Hiigaran Navy within the 30-light-year exclusion zone. Precisely what decision would be made thereafter, as well as the eventual fate of the core and the navy, would be resolved at the Council's usual pace. Hiigara was given 24 hours to comply or face the severest possible consequences.

Debate raged throughout the emergency meeting of the Diamid, yet one fact remained clear throughout. The glory of the Hiigaran Fleet, combined with the power of the Far Jumper, gave them an unstoppable advantage against any opponent foolish enough to challenge them. No foe could possibly challenge Hiigara, except one.

HONOR OVER ALL

On the matter of the Bentusi, the words of Malketh LiirHra—Kiith-Sa of his people and their representative at the Diamid—have been preserved to this day.

"We are a people forged in the struggles of battle, conflict, and death. Where others see pride, we see only duty. Where invaders see weakness, we see honor. As individuals we go to war, yet we return as family, Hiigarans, Kiith. The choice before the Diamid is that between war and submission. Our foe possesses every material advantage that we possess and hundreds of years more experience wielding the power of their core. They have the support of the Galactic Council while we stand alone. You cannot consider your spirits yet tested if you accept only those battles where victory is

certain. Many men would turn back now at the thought of the hardships before us should we challenge the Bentusi. We stand at the edge of our future with only one question to be answered. Are we to be remembered as Hiigarans, or do we bow to the sands of time?"

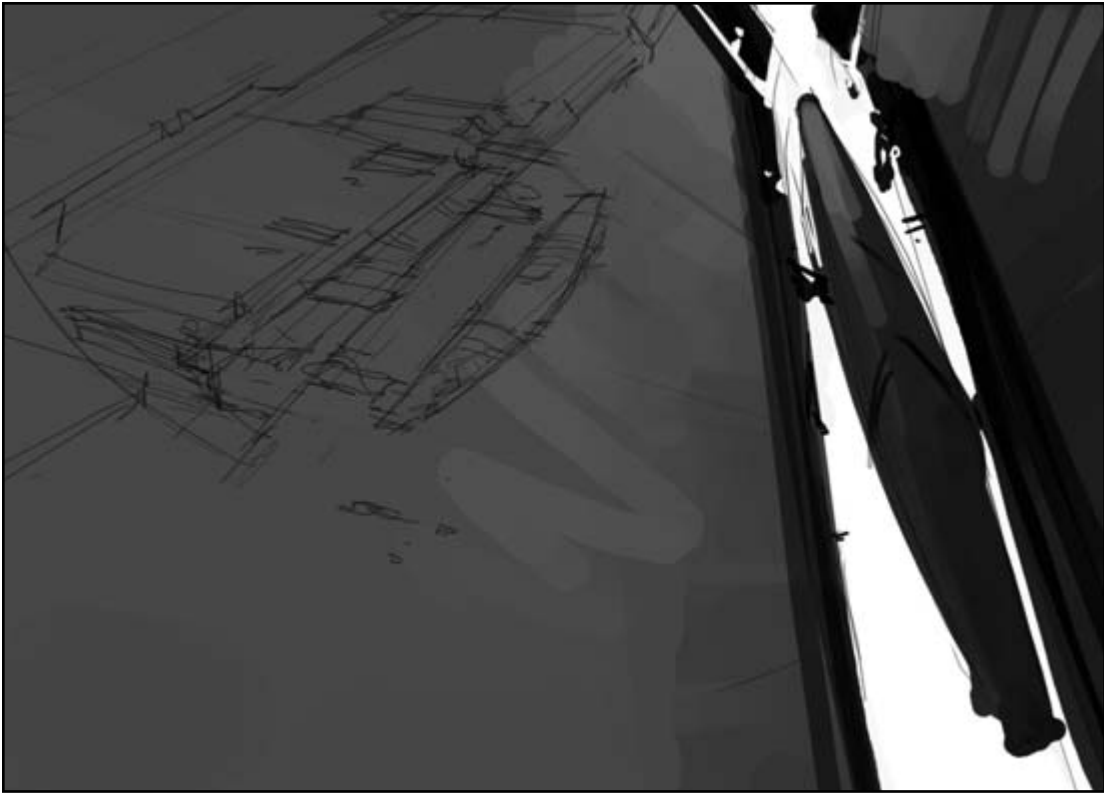
The eventual decision for the Diamid was clear. As the deadline for compliance reached its final minutes, word was sent to the Council that the Hiigarans agreed to the conditions outlined. Their Navy would be abandoned within the exclusion zone and the core would be handed into the safekeeping of the Council, with one caveat. The Hiigarans trusted none of the Council to guard the core responsibly, except the Bentusi. The core would be delivered to the Bentusi Harbor Ship and none other.

Relief within the Council was palpable. It seemed the Hiigarans had submitted at the eleventh hour, and the prospect of war had been put to rest. Yet the Hiigarans had no intention of honoring the agreement they had proposed. When the Bentusi Harbor Ship arrived within the exclusion zone, it found the entire Hiigaran Navy awaiting, and seemingly abandoned. *Sajuuk's Wrath* stood at their center, core exposed and ready for Bentusi removal.



Fig. AC-05. The Hiigaran Navy lies in wait, seemingly derelict.

However, upon observing the entry of the Bentusi and their lack of escorts, the Hiigaran Navy sprang to action. Power-up sequences firing under emergency procedures, the fleet moved against the Bentusi from every vector before they could begin to react. The Hiigaran Fleet gave no quarter, the initial salvo slamming into the housing for the Bentusi Hyperspace Core. This bold and



decisive move, had it succeeded in disabling the core of the Bentusi, could have changed the future of the Hiigaran people in the blink of an eye. Yet they had not counted upon the capabilities, experience, and raw speed of the Bentusi.

Bentusi Counterattack

Leaping immediately into action, the docking bays of the Harbor Ship began to launch powerful and compact combat-ready vessels, while the power of their core wrenched the rest of their fleet from nearby staging grounds directly into the heart of the war zone before them. Shields and defensive fields were raised as the gravity around Bentus began to increase in magnitude by the second. The Hiigaran admiral watched in shock and dismay as his fleet began to fall on all fronts before the overwhelming experience and technology of the Bentusi. What had a moment earlier seemed to be a textbook victory was quickly dissolving into defeat.

As in every battle the Bentusi had fought, they offered their opponent every opportunity to surrender. Yet even against impossible odds, the

Hiigarans fought on. *Sajuuk's Wrath* leapt from flank to flank, blinking in and out of hyperspace and bolstering the Hiigaran forces wherever it was needed, yet the Bentusi Harbor Ship outmaneuvered it each time. After many hours of solid, bloody combat, there was nothing left of the Hiigaran Navy beyond debris and their Flagship. Once again, the Bentusi offered the option of surrender, and once again they were refused. Wishing to ensure the core was preserved, they ruined the engines of *Sajuuk's Wrath* and began to maneuver into position to dock.

A Desperate Escape

However, the commander had a contingency plan prepared. Manually disengaging the mass overrides, he plotted a course for the surface of the Hiigaran moon. It was almost certainly suicide to hyperspace so close to a Gravity Well, yet he knew that any sane course he could plot the Bentusi would follow. Having watched the fleet he had proudly commanded annihilated in battle, he could not survive them and retain his honor. Even if the

maneuver ended in the ship's destruction, the Diamid had been told of his plan and knew where to search for the core. Perhaps the future could be salvaged from the wreckage of the present.

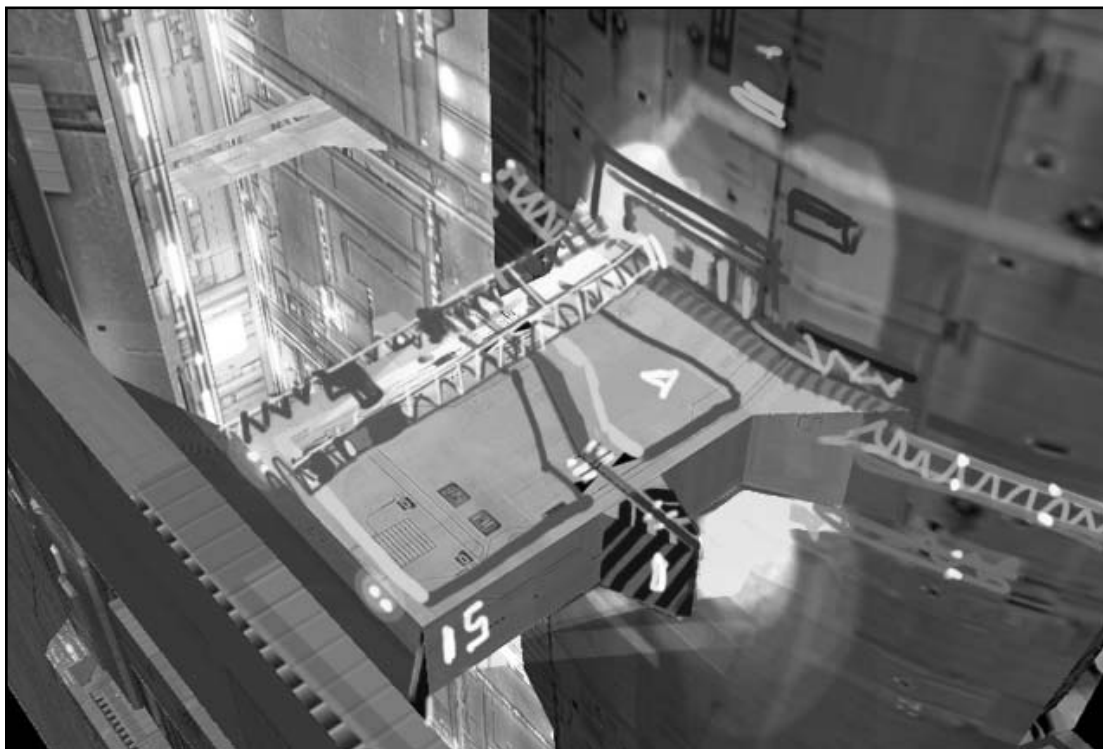
CONSEQUENCES

In the aftermath of the overwhelming Hiigaran defeat, the Galactic Council granted the remaining Hiigarans their freedom under the condition that they would never again prepare for war or bring arms against others. With the fleet wiped out and the Hyperspace Core lost (or so it was assumed) they presented no threat, in any case. Further sanctions were agreed to be unnecessary, as Hiigara had been all but crippled by its own foolish actions and stubborn pride.

The remorse of the Bentusi was second only to that of the Hiigarans. They had existed for so long alone among the space-faring races, truly unbound and possessed of power beyond the grasp of any other. After so many hundreds of years they had finally found a potential equal, or so it had seemed. Now they were responsible for stripping that power from the Hiigarans for crimes that,

while certainly of immense seriousness, essentially amounted to immaturity. They had made errors of their own, and their histories told of early incidences of abuse of the power they had been granted. If there had been an older, Far Jump-capable race present at the dawn of the Bentusi expansion, they may well have found themselves in precisely the position the Hiigarans were now trapped in. A time of formalized mourning began among the Bentusi, and when they were done, each Bentusi vessel was disarmed and demilitarized. Their announcement to the Council was one of the final entries in the Galactic Council records preserved among the documents found upon Hiigara. Events beyond this time have largely been assembled from other sources, many of them less formal than the records of the Council.

"We retract our martial support from the Council we once founded. Never again will the Bentusi wage war for the cause of peace. We bind our hands before the collected worlds. We will remain, if permitted, members of the Council, no more nor less than any other. May a new age of peace prosper free of our influence."



No Lasting Peace

The age of peace hoped for by the Bentusi was not to be, however. Lacking the guiding hand of an emperor, the Taiidan worlds were in chaos. The only remnants of their once-fearsome navy was the fleet staged upon the Hiigaran border, under the command of Admiral Riesstiu. With no emperor to guide his actions, Riesstiu declared himself sole commander of the Taiidan Navy. Already viewed as a hero due to his bravery and strategic acumen in battles past, his declaration was nearly unanimously supported. It was, however, a mere formality, as he had already been appointed commander of the border forces, which were very nearly the entirety of the Taiidan Navy after the Hiigarans' brutal invasion. It was generally believed that what was needed now was decisive and unbending leadership, and under such circumstances the admiral was seen as the perfect man to lead.

Uncompromising in the face of hard decisions and untouched by any streak of mercy, in more gentle times he may have been viewed with an edge of suspicion. Yet the destruction of the Imperial Palace had struck the Taiidan hard, and the call for revenge was heard at every turn. With the Bentusi withdrawal from military enforcement and the Hiigaran Navy in ruins, Riesstiu knew his opportunity had arrived.

The Taiidan offensive against the Hiigaran Empire moved quickly, smashing what small defenses it encountered upon the way to its final destination. Each planet it passed was offered the chance to join the Taiidan Empire, and all those who refused were annihilated. The Taiidan had developed weapons that would cleanse the entire surface of a planet of any sign of life, and they were both prepared and horribly eager to use them upon those who had slain their emperor.

A Terrible Revenge

The first planet to refuse served as an unforgettable demonstration. Hundreds of millions of lives were ended without warning as revenge for a crime of which they were ultimately innocent. After that, few other worlds refused the offer of Taiidan alliance. Regardless of their submission, many

planets were razed regardless. Some, the admiral claimed, had converted too easily and therefore would make untrustworthy allies. Others were overly reluctant and therefore most likely still loyal to Hiigara. More lives were lost in the space of Riesstiu's Revenge, as the slaughter became known, than had been lost in all recorded battles since the Outer Rim Trade Routes were first established. The Council threatened sanctions, yet Riesstiu carried on without care. Taiidan was an Empire without an emperor, and there was little effect any sanction could have upon them given their complete lack of structure or hierarchy.

As news spread of the utter carnage being waged against a defenseless foe, protest began to build. Many races, both those of the Council and independent worlds, called for the Bentusi to intervene with force, yet they would not. Their vow had been in earnest and though they wept for the Hiigarans fate, they would not return to the ways of conflict they had abandoned. They did volunteer to adjudicate discussion between Riesstiu and the Diamid, in pursuit of an acceptable resolution.

Taiidan Demands

The admiral's demands were simple. All Hiigaran worlds would now belong to the Taiidan Empire. Hiigara itself would stand as the site for the new Imperial Palace, given that it had the resources and infrastructure in place that had been destroyed upon Taiidan. Every native Hiigaran would be executed or pressed into slavery, dependant upon the level of their involvement in the destructions wreaked upon the Taiidan Homeworld.

Despite attempts to find a middle ground by the Diamid, the admiral would not move on any point. The Hiigaran spirit had been broken by the loss of the fleet and the core such that they could nearly accept the loss of their empire, even the occupation of their planet, but slavery was too bitter a pill for even the most broken Hiigaran spirit to swallow. Resigning themselves to destruction, they prepared for the end.

EXILE

Yet the Bentusi, shamed by their part in the Hiigarans' downfall, continued to negotiate and finally managed to find a solution acceptable to the Council, Taiidan, Riesstiu, and the Hiigarans. The Hiigarans would have a single month to board a sublight transport departing toward the galactic outskirts. Any left behind would be enslaved or



executed, but those willing to accept the compromise arranged by the Bentusi would be dispatched to an occupied desert planet far beyond established trade routes. There they could attempt to build a new life, provided they never again developed Far Jump hyperspace technology. If they were to venture beyond their planet with the now-missing core or another like it, their destruction would be sealed.

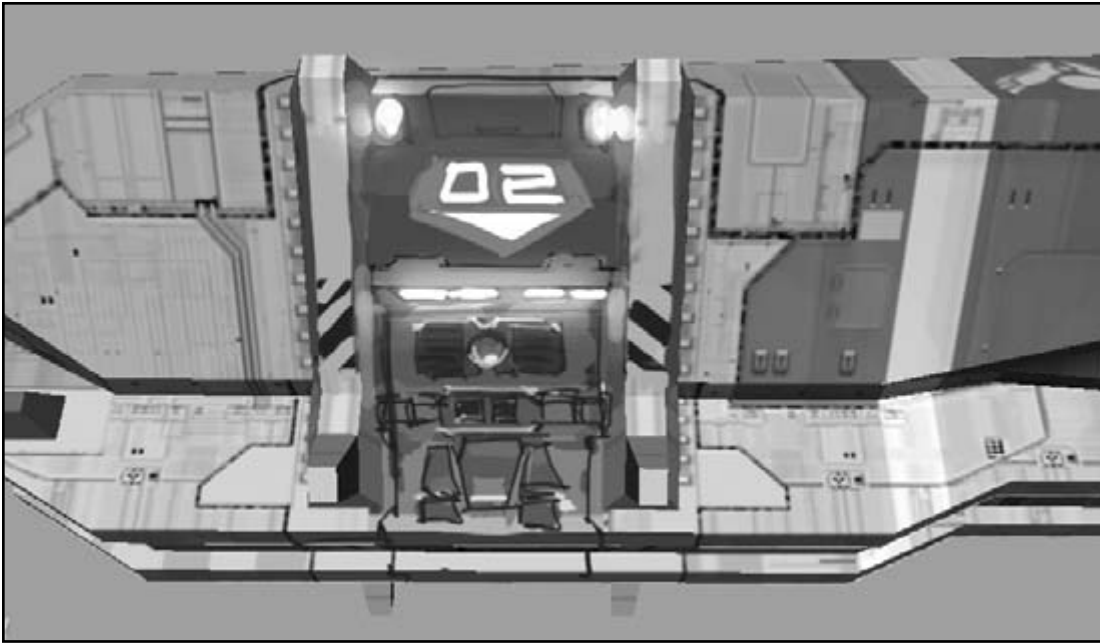
The Diamid decided quickly. Given the choice of death or exile, the Kiith-Sa voted overwhelmingly in favor of granting their people the option of life, regardless of how difficult that life may prove to be.

Thus, all of the able-bodied population of Hiigara were exiled to the desert world of Kharak, only the smallest of victories still held within their grasp. The Hyperspace Core, the single most powerful artifact possessed by the Hiigaran people and the match of that possessed by the Bentusi, had been retrieved from Hiigara's moon and smuggled aboard the ship that carried them to their Exile. Thus, they hoped, their ancestors may one day have the chance to regain their home and their empire. Even in the most futile of situations, the Hiigarans retained their dignity and dared hope for the future, despite the dangers that possession of the Core brought with it. And so, onboard sublight transports the Hiigarans saw Hiigara vanish forever behind them.

Life on Kharak

For 3,000 years, the Exiles survived on Kharak. Hiigara became a legend, and in time even the legend was forgotten. This all changed when a satellite discovered an ancient starship buried in the sand. Inside lay the Guidestone and the word "Hiigara," home, etched on its surface. But this was not the only discovery, for deep within the ruin lay the ancient Hyperspace Core. When once it had resulted in their Exile, this core would now return the Exiles home.

The blueprints of the core were integrated and expanded upon, or so the Hiigarans presumed. In fact, the core itself remained at the heart of the Mothership's drive. It was merely the containment unit that had been expanded to account for the stresses of sending a Mothership class vessel through hyperspace. The containment units, which



had proven perfectly sufficient onboard *Sajuuk's Wrath*, were unusable due to the substantially lower energy output of post-Exile technology.

Despite having brought the core with them, the Hiigarans had no understanding of its power or its true origins until 40 years after their arrival on Hiigara, when the first documents explaining its history were unearthed. Accompanying these documents were a collection of blueprints and schematics remarkably similar to those produced thousands of years later by the engineers who built the Mothership.

However, further delving into the archives revealed that these cores were more than merely the instruments of the Hiigarans' Exile and return. In many of the archives it was recorded that the cores possessed by the Hiigarans and the Bentusi represented two of three powerful artifacts dating far beyond the reach of history.

BLESSING OR CURSE

Reports differed depending on the source. Some stated that these cores were a gift from Sajuuk, the Great Maker, to his favored children. Others suggested they may have been forged at the same time as the universe itself, within the same forge in which Sajuuk had hammered the sky from raw

thought. Still more implied the cores survived from a time before time, when gods traveled the stars in search of races to endow with sentience for their amusement. More mundane, but mentioned in several key writings, was the possibility they were merely leftovers from an empire that had fallen many hundreds of thousand of years prior.

Yet all the documents, while differing in many areas, agreed upon one fact. When the third of the great cores is unearthed, it will mark the beginnings of the End Time. Judgment will come upon the children of Sajuuk, and only the Sajuuk-Khar, the chosen people, will stand unchanged by His Hand.

Mother of the New Hiigaran Age

Debate raged throughout the Diamid for many years after the Hiigarans returned home regarding what should be done with this ancient core. The Kiith Nabaal and Makaan both argued in favor of restoring the core to active service, while Kiith Soban and Somtaaw thought the past was better left buried. However, in reality, all awaited the verdict of one Kiith upon the matter.

Kiith

The most important social institution amongst the Hiigarans is that of the Kiith, an extended and formalized family hierarchy. Both a social and a political organization, each Kiith can be broadly categorized in terms of philosophy and outlook. A Kiith's leader, known as a Kiith-Sa, is responsible for conveying the desires of the Kiith to the Diamid, the Hiigaran governing body. While a Kiith-Sa once had the power of life and death over every member of the Kiith, those days are long past, and a modern Kiith-Sa can only act with the support of his people.

Ultimately the decision lay not with Kiith S'Jet, but in the hands of its most honored and respected member, Karan S'Jet. As the pioneer of the neural interface that made the Mothership's journey possible, and the mind behind its pilgrimage, hers was without doubt the most respected opinion on Hiigara. All the more so because it was so rarely given, and even then only on matters of grave import. There was no doubt that in a matter tied so closely to the history of their people and the technology of the Hyperspace Cores, Karan's opinion, if given, would be the deciding factor for the Diamid.

Her connection to the Mothership had permanently changed Karan. The years since the return to Hiigara did not show upon her features, nor had she lost any of the sharpness and incisive intelligence that had allowed her to both develop the first neural link and guide the Mothership through the trials it had undergone traveling to Hiigara.

Yet Karan had withdrawn from any involvement in governance almost immediately after reaching Hiigara. While never detailing her reasons, she had made it clear that being connected to the core had changed the way in which she saw both the world and the stars. Already regarded as a savior, her distance from the public eye actually enhanced her

status as an enigmatic messiah, and the cult of personality that had already begun to form around her was growing daily. Already various groups were offering insights into her every word, and icons depicting her embedded within the bridge of the Mothership were sold in every corner of Hiigara.

The Core at Rest

On the matter of the ancient core she offered a rare public opinion, outlining the matter in the simplest terms. The core, regardless of the power it offered, was best left as a publicly accessible monument to the trials and triumphs of the Hiigaran people and the mysteries that still remain to be resolved, rather than being pressed into active service. After all, while it would offer near limitless travel to the fleets of Hiigara, it was a freedom that would merely distract from the duties at hand. With the process of rebuilding still ongoing, the population of Hiigara was still only barely sufficient to protect the nearby sectors of space, let alone to travel across the galaxy in safety.

Following her wishes, a museum was founded at Assaam Kiith'sid, also the home of the planetary government. Here the core and the history of its origins and meaning to the people of Hiigara were made available to any and all who cared to visit. For many, it was the first chance to see the instrument of their salvation, and also to reflect upon its role in their Exile. Also including the few artifacts brought with the Hiigarans from Kharak and many new discoveries unearthed upon Hiigara, the museum reflected the past, present, and future of the Hiigaran people.

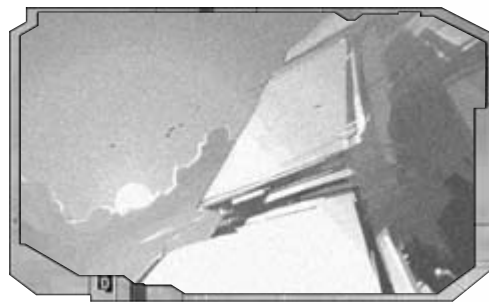


Fig. AC-06. The museum at Assaam Kiith'sid.

ENEMIES OLD AND NEW

So the reconstruction of Hiigara continued for a time. Yet the matter of the core was not settled. Rumors soon began to reach Hiigara of rising conflict in the Eastern Fringes, long a war-torn zone constantly harassed by forces from the Vaygr Reaches. However, the nature of the conflict had recently undergone dramatic change. Where previously small, disorganized raiding parties had launched guerilla raids upon the fringes, now they came with overwhelming force, pressing relentlessly onwards.

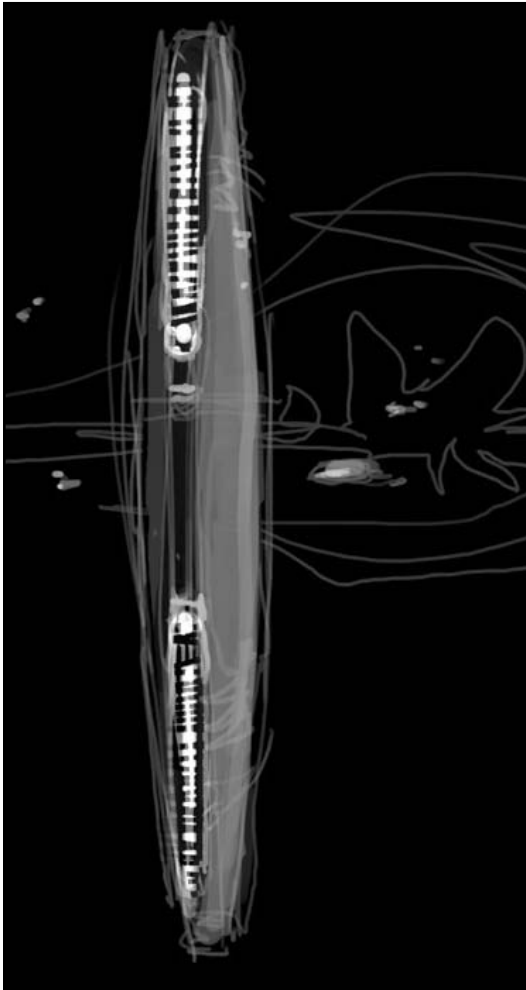
It would appear that a new warlord had taken control of the splintered Vaygr tribes and Taiidan remnants and united them beneath a single banner. Known only as Makaan, his advance could

no longer be dismissed or ignored. What had been only a nuisance for hundreds of years had become something substantially different, a holy crusade with Hiigara as its destination.

Analysis of Makaan's movements allowed but one conclusion. He was headed in the direction of Hiigara and along the way was gathering a fleet larger than any since the time of Exile.

Furthermore, the manner and the speed with which his fleet was traveling had a chilling implication. The Third Core, spoken of in prophecy and myth, had been found and was in his hands.

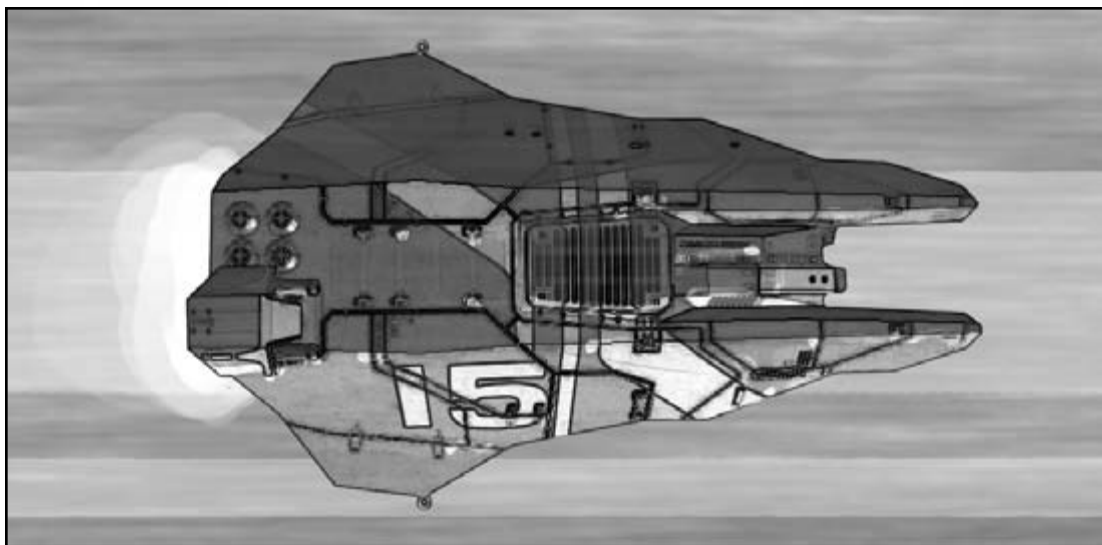
The arrival of the Vaygr also frayed the Galactic Council, and the Vaygr incursions started a series of border clashes that quickly spread like wildfire. Within a few short years, the entire Inner Rim was at war. Many pleaded to the Bentusi to intervene, but they remained enigmatically distant. The fate of the Inner Rim was not theirs to decide. With war spreading and tension high, the Galactic Council fractured, and an institution that had survived for millennia collapsed.



Sajuuk

While there is no universal religion amongst the Hiigarans, almost all believe that in some form or another, Sajuuk—the Great Maker, He Whose Hand Shapes What Is—shapes the paths of their destiny. Specifics vary wildly from sect to sect. Some believe Sajuuk is a benign god who protected them in Exile and guided them to their home. Others view him as an uncaring deity whose actions follow their own, inexplicable designs.

His people worshipped him as the Sajuuk-Khar, the chosen one foretold by prophecy to lead his people to conquest and salvation. He had not only united the Vaygr, he had given them a cause, a dream, and a reason to fight. It quickly became clear that the Eastern Fringes, long a safe buffer against Vaygr incursions, would not hold for more than a few months, at most, against this newly organized horde.



Makaan and the Sajuuk-Khar

Under Makaan, the Vaygr were moving with unheard of strength, speed, and numbers. Planets fell before his forces and were stripped of every available resource and left barren. These resources simply acted to bolster the growing war fleet and carry Makaan to yet more triumphant victories.

Like a wave of locusts, the forces of Makaan swept unstopably forward, seemingly without any goal but the destruction of all that lay before them. It was only by piecing together the reports of various individuals who had escaped their attacks that the matter finally became clear.

Again the Diamid looked toward Karan for guidance, and this time her advice was to attempt the reactivation of the ancient core. However, if this was to take place she had a request. Again, she would be the one to join with the Core via her neural links. In her words, *"I did not lead my people to their home in order to allow their destruction now. If the call has come to defend Hiigara then I must do so. It is neither duty nor obligation that drives me; it is simply what must be."*

The Diamid attempted to persuade Karan to reconsider, explaining that there were many other people more capable, better trained, and possessed of the same neural link that had once made Karan unique. Hundreds of hyperspace-capable ships had been built since Karan led the first Mothership to Hiigara, and advances had been made in both technology and technique. More importantly, Karan was of great importance to the people of Hiigara as both a focus of faith and as a figurehead. Yet Karan would not be swayed from her decision. If the core was to be reactivated and the fleet of Makaan held at bay, it would be her mind at the helm. Thus when the construction of the new Mothership, the *Pride of Hiigara*, was begun at Tanis, Karan was there to oversee the final elements and tests, along with the ancient core that was to be installed within it. Her mind was to guide it in the coming times, for she understood what the appearance of Makaan and his possession of the Third Core implied.

The End Times had begun.

GLOSSARY

Angels: Fighter pilot jargon for "vertical" distance to a target, above a pilot's horizon. The distance itself is expressed in terms of 1000's of meters. A pilot referring to another craft 2.5 km above his horizon would say "angels twenty-five." Less specific terms include "angels low" (target is low on horizon) or "angels high" (target is directly above, or near-so). See also *Devils*.

ATI: An abbreviation for Advanced Tactical Interface. This interface is used to control the ships in combat, display combat-relevant information, and provide order feedback while in the game. It shows the ship type, the battle ping indicators, battle momentum indicator, and so on.

Devils: Fighter pilot jargon for "vertical" distance to a target that is below the pilot's horizon. The distance itself is expressed in terms of 1000's of meters. A pilot referring to another craft 3.6 km below his horizon would say "devils thirty-six." See also *Angels*.

Klik: Slang term for "kilometer."

MBF: Main Battle Fleet. A fleet's largest coherent battle formation. An MBF typically includes most if not all Super-Capital Ships, a large contingent of Frigates, and multiple support wings of Corvettes and Strikecraft. It represents the fleet's core build potential and offensive power.

O'Clock: Fighter pilot jargon for relative heading of a target. An imaginary clock-face is superimposed on the pilot's horizon, so that the 12 o'clock position is at the front of the cockpit, and the 6 o'clock position is at the rear. Relative headings to a target are then "read" off the clock. A target directly to the right could then be said to be at "three o'clock." Relative vertical distance is expressed as *Angels* or *Devils*.

Orbat: Abbreviation for "Order of Battle." An Order of Battle is defined as the array of ships and weapons potentially available to a Fleet Commander.

Port: The left side of a ship, from the perspective of an officer aboard the ship's bridge looking forward.

Starboard: The right side of a ship, from the perspective of an officer aboard the ship's bridge looking forward.

TacSit: Abbreviation for Tactical Situation. There are several factors that determine how a fleet commander will approach a given combat scenario: the number and composition of friendly and hostile forces available in play; availability of resources; and the surrounding "terrain" (nebulae, dust clouds, and so on). These all combine to form a *Tactical Situation*.

World-plane: The horizontal plane of the world where your ships are located. The light brown disk that appears when using the Sensors Manager indicates this plane.

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